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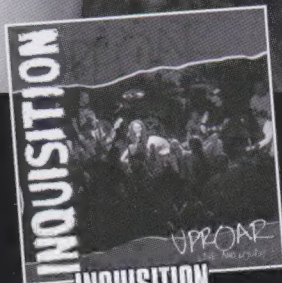
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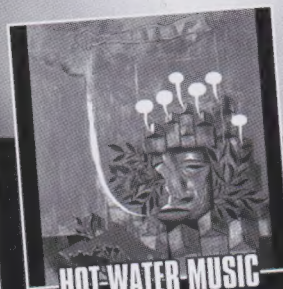
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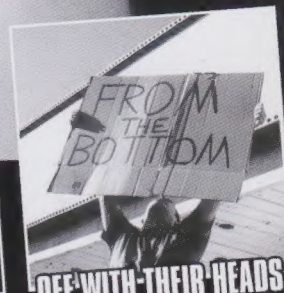
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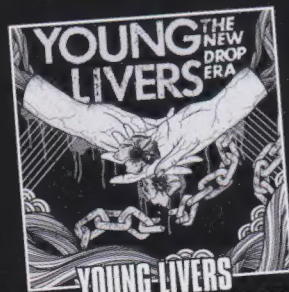
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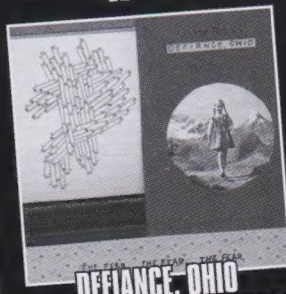
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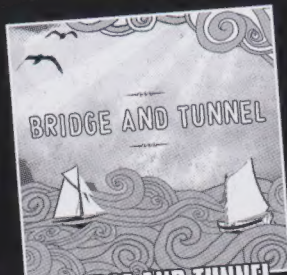
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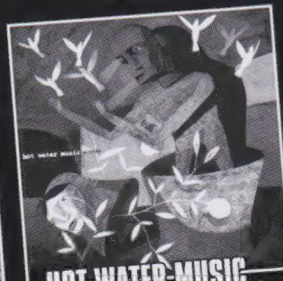
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Due to the generous contributions of time (big kudos go out to Nick Toerner) and money, Razorcake was able to launch an entirely new dimension to Razorcake: podcasts. Simply, they're audio computer files you can download onto your computer and listen to many different Razorcake contributors and friends playing their favorite songs and having a great time doing it. Razorcake finally has a voice to go along with all of these printed words. A new show will post free of charge every Friday. Rad. We already have our sights on making audio recordings of many of the Gorsky Press projects, too.

Even though it doesn't look like a traditional ad, on the opposite side of this page is the gateway to our website, which is now updated every other day. Not only does it feature exclusive live reviews, columns, and color photos that aren't in the zine, it also features our extensive hand-picked distribution of other fellow DIY-ers' goods at reasonable prices.

If you would like to give Razorcake some assistance, we're looking for help in the following areas: non-profit grant writer, FileMaker Pro wizard, PHP-nuke website coders, website record review posters, and anyone who has experience with setting up a 501(c)6. If you live in the L.A. area, we could always use a helping hand.

Contact us via [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org) if you'd like to help out.

Thank you.

—Todd Taylor

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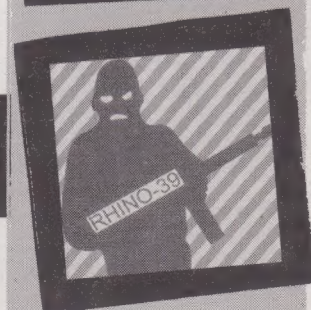
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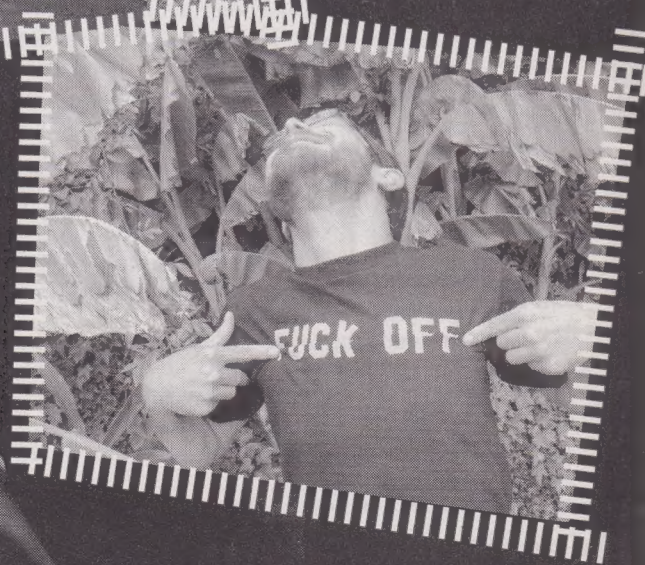




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## Like Digital Mix Tapes

This is my public apology to Eric Redding. In 1986, Eric brought over two mix tapes that one of his older siblings had made. For lack of a better term, we were dorks. Not cool dorks. Dork dorks. Lower level Boy Scouts, too-tight-hand-me-down-shorts-wearing dorks. He favored Dungeons and Dragons. Pictures of buffed-out dwarves holding bloody swords were in his bedroom. Eric was a friend of both my brother, Andy, and mine. I remember Eric's parents a lot less than the Slayer pentagram tapestry over his bed.

I had all intention of returning those two mix tapes. I hadn't gotten a chance to listen to them and was just going to return them.

Parts of our house were covered with linoleum: the kitchen and the hallway to the front door. Over the years we'd lived there, my brother and I had perfected quick runs on the carpet and negotiated slides over the linoleum. Sorta like ice skating. Eric had rung the doorbell and my brother made a short burst to the door, slid, and, instead of bracing himself with the door to stop, he put his hand completely through the harvest gold glass that was installed directly to the right of it.

After the glass shattered completely, Eric fled. Who the hell wants to stand around after someone just put their fist through a window when you ring a doorbell? We didn't see Eric any more that day. Andy wrapped a rag T-shirt around his hand. We swept up the glass after realizing that no major artery had been punctured. (We were amateur EMTs. Accidents of this nature we not uncommon.) Eric had apparently avoided enough injury to run away full speed. Andy booked it to the adjacent desert to one of his many rock hiding places.

I was left in the middle of the day with two cassettes and a hole next to the front door that I knew couldn't be fudged. (You'd never guess that a piece of ice, after ricocheting off a body part, was

capable of denting drywall.) I couldn't leave, so I turned off the air conditioning and sat and listened to those tapes. The artwork looked like someone had chewed up a magazine then puked it in a collage onto the J-card. The handwriting was tiny. There were so many songs. I didn't know where the band name ended and the song title began. Richard Hell's "Love Comes in Spurts" and Agent Orange were on it. It was one of my first bread crumbs towards punk rock.

Several days later, after Andy helped Dad place and paint a wood panel to replace the glass, he called Eric to apologize for the trauma. Eric came over to hang out. He asked about the tapes. I lied and told him I'd returned them to him. (Why it didn't occur to me to duplicate the tapes eludes me.)

Hello 2008. I was less-than-enthusiastic and suspicious when techno-douche words like "blogosphere" and "podcast" came bouncing my way. I understand "burrito" and "vinyl record." But then I understood what a podcast could be. It can be a digital mix tape, a simple audio file that people can download for free and play at their leisure.

Zines are many things, but you can't hear the music the Razorcake gang is so preoccupied with. For the first time ever, you can. This is a big thing for us. Early in March, we launched our Razorcake podcast series. We will post up a new show every Friday. It's folks spinning records, talking about them, and celebrating, song by song, these scattered clues of music that we're always following. And now, you can hear them, too.

I never imagined I'd be typing this next sentence: Go to [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org), type in "podcast" in the search function, and I think you'll be happily surprised.

Eric, I'm an asshole. I'm trying to make it up to you, one musical bread crumb at a time.

—Todd Taylor

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August 1st, 2008

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Cover art by Lauren Measure  
([blackandredeye.com](http://blackandredeye.com))

This issue is dedicated to the memories of Michael Conley (MIA),  
Sean Finnegan (Void), and Lynette Knackstedt (Skankin' Pickle).

Contact Razorcake via our regularly  
updated website, [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)  
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"There are some enterprises in  
which a careful disorderliness is  
the true method."

—Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

PEEBER!  
PEEBER!  
PEEBER!

Ben Snakepit's dog  
should be America's  
ambassador of cute.

**THANK YOU:** Lauren Measure for turning the theory of "I know you can you make it rad" into scientific proof for our cover; Davey Quinn is the Patron Saint of Dignified Failure thanks to Steve Larder for his illo. in Jim's column; How the government expects us all to take our daily dose of veggies thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Herb's column; Uhm, if we don't say that Paul Wanish is a robotic camera, we may get in trouble...; Your lines are as crisp as Carswell's prose thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Dale, I still say that for anyone to make a serious assertion of Led Zepplin's "greatness" they should have stopped hurting that fourteen-year-old girl singer when they recorded... wait, that's a man dude singing? thanks to Travis T. for his illo. in Gary's column; Callin' out Chuck Dukowski on moral issues thanks to Jimmy Alvarado for the Los Illegals interview and, yes, yes, those are the photos from the album, all you have to do is write for a free copy of the zine thanks to Harry Gamboa and David Guilbert for those Los Illegals pictures; It's sorta amazing how a fist turned upside down looks like a scrote with four balls thanks to Kevin DeBroux, Andy Junk, and Dave Disorder for their respective kung fu/bong moves with the Bear Proof Suit interview; So, in, like, 7.33 years of putting out a zine, we've never had a map as a graphic element, then wham-bam, two in the same issue by people 3,000 miles away (we couldn't plan something that tricky) thanks to Lauren Measure for her expert skills on the Potential Johns layout; Kross kapitalismen och hela jävelsamhället (read the second-to-last sentence of the interview for the translation) thanks to Arlen Jones, Anders Fryksborn, and Keith Rosson for elephanting, ramming, and goating the Svartrandt interview; Dude, your boss' dad is a D-I-C-K thanks to Chris Baxter for his considerable Photoshop skills; The following show their love of music by being the gatekeepers of bands, zinesters, and authors whose co-workers and family members lie to them by saying "You're really good," by reviewing said cultural artifacts: Ryan Leach, Jessica T., Kurt Morris, Allan MacInnis, MP Johnson, Bryan Static, Kristen K., Nick Toerner, Will Kwiatkowski, Joe Evans III, Lord Kveldulfr, Dave Dillon, Art Ettinger, Craven Rock, CT Terry, Sean Koepenick, Adrian Salas, Corinne, Dan Glenn Fury, Jimmy Alvarado, Josh Bonke, Ty Stranglehold, Keith Rosson, Dontstopbelieving, Mr. Z. Reyan, Buttersnoot, Speedway Randy, Dave Williams, Constantine Koutsoutis, Aphid Peewit, and Mike Frame; These folks collect, sort, and decide the electronic vs. print divide. In other publications, they'd be called "section editors": Kurt Morris, Vincent Battilana, and Megan Pants; The interweb is a dark place thanks to Juan Espinosa and Ian Silber for helping us with those endless Os and 1s; Lifting boxes of zines makes you strong... strong! thanks to Katz's brother, Chris Devlin, Stacy Medina, and the aforementioned Vincent.



# EVERYBODY'S WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND



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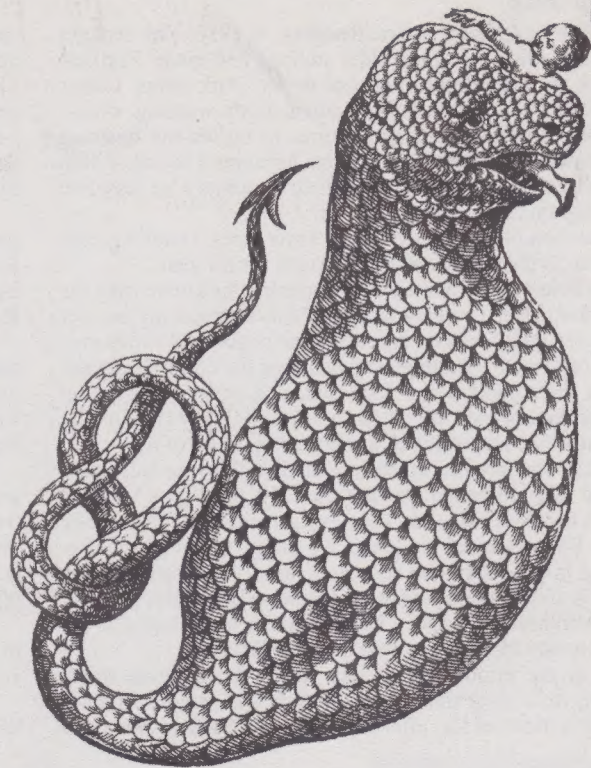
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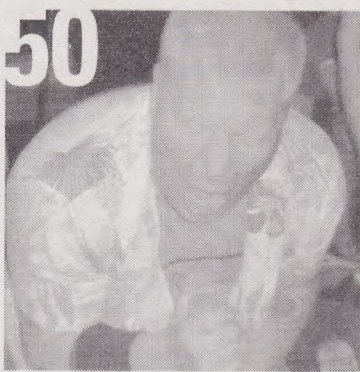
# RAZORCAKE

Issue #44 June / May 2008

PO Box 42129  
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[www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)

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- 78 **Record** Sounds like a robot trying to make itself throw up...
- 104 **Zine** Like anybody's gonna give a fuck anywhere but, I don't know, maybe Obsessive-Compulsive Spinster Quarterly or some shit...
- 109 **Book** And then she beat some guy up, puked, and, I don't know, took it in the ass or something...
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Individual opinions expressed within are not necessarily those of Razorcake/Gorsky Press, Inc.

Razorcake/ Gorsky, Inc. Board of Directors are: Todd Taylor, Sean Carswell, Dan Clarke, Katy Spining, Leo Emil Tober III

This issue of Razorcake and [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org) were put together by: Todd Taylor, Daryl Gussin, Megan Pants, Sean Carswell, Skinny Dan, James Hernandez, Jenny Moncayo, Chris Baxter, Chris Devlin, Amy Adoyzie, Dave Disorder, Lauren Measure, Uri Garcia, Joe Evans III, Adrian Salas, Vincent Battilana, Juan Espinosa, Stacy Medina, Nick Toerner, Ian Silber, Patricia Coleman, Kurt Morris, Dontyouforgetaboutme, and Matt Army.

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"I was now becoming a multi-faceted nerd."

# My First Con:

## Further Adventures into Nerdo-Begerdo

"So this is your first con?" asked the girl sharing the one dry corner between the side entrance of the Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel and Convention Center and the flooded parking lot.

"Yeah," I answered, sucking a drag off a cigarette as I reminded myself to use the abbreviated form of the word "convention." "This is my first con."

My smoking patio companion, who I had met all of two minutes earlier, was wearing a shoulder-exposing pirate's wench outfit, despite us being stuck in the worst storm L.A. had seen in ages. She squeezed in close to her friend for warmth. The two had driven out here from the Inland Empire, not an exceptionally long journey from Burbank, but one that could be quite bothersome in a land where streets and freeways are not built to handle a deluge like this.

They were dressed for the pirate-themed Rum Party that was happening later that night. We talked a bit about high seas marauders and then segued into anime, which was the reason why just over 2,000 people were now wandering through this hotel. As we chatted, I pulled my black pea coat and gray scarf as close to my skin as possible, shivering as I lamented the fact that I was one of very few people here not engaged in cosplay, which is short for "costume play." It was obvious that I was the new *otaku*, a Japanese term for a fanatic that often refers to anime and manga aficionados, on the scene and these temporary chums were clearly veterans of anime conventions. Uh, I mean cons.

This was Anime Los Angeles, the fourth installment of the anime convention that occurs in early January. It's not a large convention, at least not in comparison to summertime events like Anime Expo and, the mother of all such gatherings, San Diego ComicCon, but it's large enough to have outgrown its former digs in Van Nuys. I found out about the three-day event less than forty-eight hours earlier, when I had been scrolling through AnimeCons.com to find something local. Anime Los Angeles was perfect, as it was only ten minutes away from work and offered reasonably priced day passes (\$22, which isn't bad considering that I spent about eight hours there).

I said it was for work, that I was on the prowl for some story that no one else would have, and, while that was true, it wasn't my only reason for hitting up Anime Los Angeles. For the past few years, I had been harboring a secret that only my boyfriend and a few members of my family knew. I'm an anime nerd, an *otaku*.

It started a few years ago, when I began graduate school and stumbled upon a show called *Fullmetal Alchemist* as I was pulling an all-nighter. Set in a universe parallel to our own just before the start of World War I, *Fullmetal Alchemist* is the story of two brothers, Edward and Alphonse Elric, who try to use alchemy to resurrect their mother. The experiment has tragic consequences. Alphonse was spared from death only because elder brother Edward was able to attach his soul to a suit of armor, a feat that cost Edward an arm and a leg, literally. The two then depart on a mission to restore their bodies. In the process, though, they become trapped in a mess of both political and familial drama that gradually changes their perspectives on life and alchemy. It is, at its core, a philosophical tale—the first rule of alchemy, as the show's intro states, is "equivalent exchange," which essentially means that, in order to receive, you must give up something dear—one that is wrapped in more suspense and heartbreaking moments than any television show I had ever seen. It's also an incredibly popular anime.

Sometime during the course of my stay at Anime Los Angeles, I chatted with a thirtysomething guy who had flown to Los Angeles to attend the con with his niece. He said that it's something of a ritual for them; every year she gets to select a con that they will attend together. We were chatting about what we like in anime—dark themes, well-written story arcs—and started listing off a host of our favorites.

"Of course, I like *Fullmetal Alchemist*," he said.

*Fullmetal Alchemist* is to *otaku* culture now as the Cure and the Smiths are to music geekdom, it's what fuels that initial hunger to dig deeper into that world. I went from the saga of the Elric brothers to Satoshi Kon's psychological thriller *Paranoia Agent* to the

vampire slayers of the short film *Blood* and its television sequel *Blood Plus* to a sci-fi retelling of *The Count of Monte Cristo* called *Gankutsuou* to the morally conflicted witch of *Witch Hunter Robin*.

And it didn't stop there. I spent nights glued to the computer, trying to work, but instead procrastinated by searching for AMVs (anime music videos) that combine re-edited anime footage with songs.

I took a computer printout of *Blood Plus* heroine Saya Otonashi with me to my hairdresser when I cut off all my hair last year.

"Well, you know it won't look quite the same on real hair as it does in a drawing," she told me. It still looked pretty awesome.

Then I tried to convince my boyfriend to dress up with me as two of the soul reapers from *Bleach* for my friend's costume party wedding. He laughed and I ended up dressing in Gothic Lolita fashion instead.

Maybe I shouldn't be telling people this.

\*\*\*

One look around the facility will give you an idea of what's popular right now in the world of anime. Those in cosplay had a tendency to reflect the shows that are currently airing as new episodes on Cartoon Network. Both girls and boys came dressed as the lead character of *Naruto*, the story of a young ninja easily identified by thin, cat whisker-like marks on his face. The older kids, those who were probably almost finished with high school or beginning college, opted for characters from *Bleach*, the soul reapers dressed in ankle-length black robes. And the teens who looked like your typical MySpace photo-obsessed emo boys and Gothic Lolita girls, well, they were actually representing characters from *Death Note*.

You could find replicas of the *Death Note*, a notebook with the special ability of killing the person whose name is scrawled inside, in the vendors' area, along with an assortment of plush and plastic anime-related toys, Japanese streetwear-styled clothing, manga, and DVDs ranging in selection from obscure to mainstream, family-friendly to



adult-oriented. At least one booth boldly advertised its secret stash of *hentai*, which is animated porn, and the sign caught the attention of a particularly interested party while I was paying for my copy of *Afro Samurai*. He was a little younger and a bit smaller than the Comic Book Guy on *The Simpsons*, but no less a connoisseur of his preferred form of entertainment.

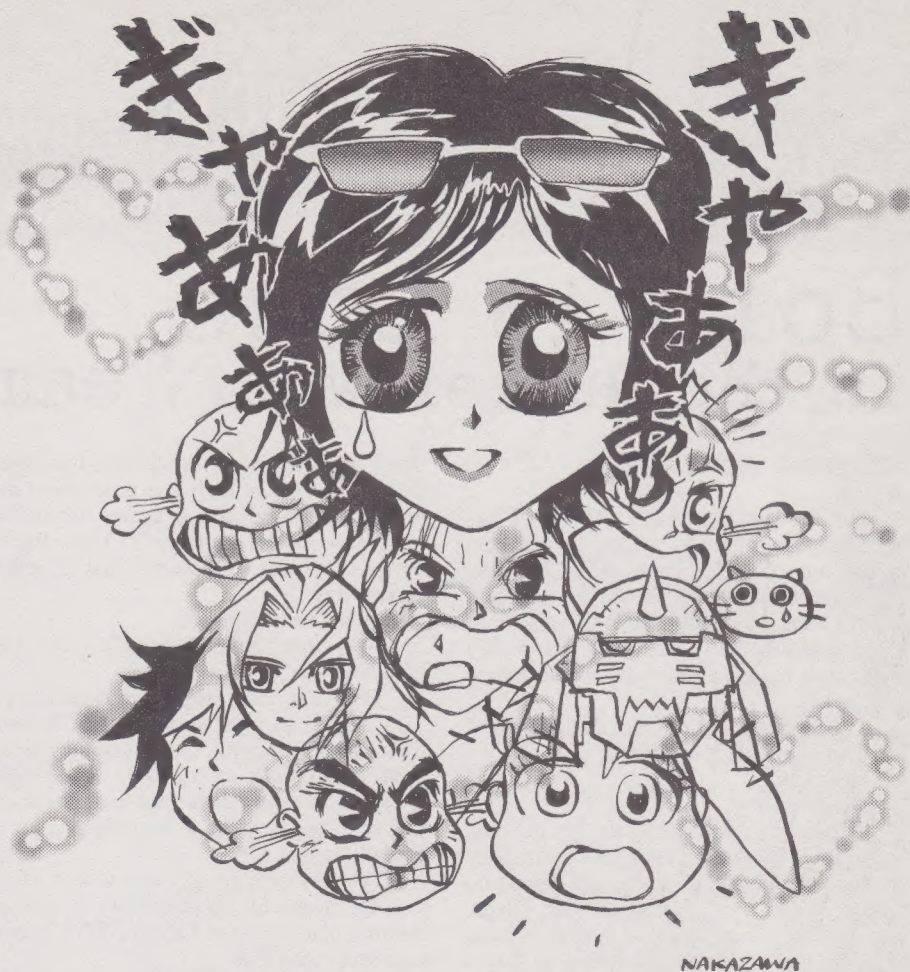
"So," he nearly bellowed, so as to interrupt my transaction, "where is this supposed *hentai*?" His voice was a mix of condescension and disbelief, as though he expected a DVD cover featuring a horny octopus to be in full display on the table for every curious twelve-year-old boy in a *Naruto* costume to swipe.

You know, I was trying to get through this day without reverting to hipster snobbery and snide remarks, but Hentai Master ruined that for me. The only problem was, I couldn't think of anything snide to say, so I laughed. It was only supposed to be a snicker, but the sound developed into something heartier. The girl at the booth bit down on her lip, nearly getting a tooth stuck in her piercing, as she tried not to follow my very bad example. I handed her a ten dollar bill, grabbed my newly purchased DVD, and tried to sneak out of the booth as quickly as possible without making eye contact with Hentai Master.

I scurried out into the artists' alley, which is where budding manga craftspeople sell their wares. The bulk of the work available was fan art with renderings of characters from *Naruto*, *Death Note*, *Bleach*, and *Fullmetal Alchemist*, amongst the most common pieces. Many of the artists worked on commission, quickly sketching your favorite manga/anime character while you wait for a nominal fee, generally in the five to fifteen dollar range, depending on size and detail. While fan art was the most prevalent, there was still a large chunk of artists who were selling original material. I noticed that *yaoi* or "boy love," an anime/manga subgenre geared towards women that focuses on boy-on-boy liaisons, was far more prevalent than *yuri*, which is your standard girl-on-girl for guys action.

Despite being part of the target audience for *yaoi*, I'm not sure I really get it. Is it supposed to be erotic or is it a parody turning the tables on the guys who get hot and bothered over the idea of two girls lip-locking? I'm inclined to believe that the latter is the answer.

There were hints of *yaoi* during the AMV contest later that evening, nothing hardcore, but enough innuendo to make every sixteen-year-old girl in the audience (and there were a lot of them) scream with glee. One of the most interesting videos in the competition re-edited scenes from *Gankutsuou* to portray an unrequited love between the story's protagonist Albert de Morcerf and his best friend Franz d'Epinay and paired the footage with the Jimmy Somerville song "Selfish Days." Perhaps the crowd was far too young to get the connection between the former Bronski Beat singer and video's plotline,



KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA

## As a fangirl of gay male singers whose popularity peaked in the 1980s, I think I got the message.

but as a fangirl of gay male singers whose popularity peaked in the 1980s, I think I got the message.

It looked like the convention might have gone on the rest of the night, but I left after the AMV competition, as it was already 11 PM or thereabouts and I had been there since three in the afternoon. It took an hour to get across the Valley while the storm continued to flood every east-west thoroughfare in sight. And so I drove slowly and I thought a lot about the con. For years I had been trapped in a music box. I would go to those events, those shops, and know at least a handful of people wherever I went. I always knew how to start

a conversation and when to end it. I was a single-minded nerd. On this day, though, I stepped into a world I had never experienced, never thought I would experience. I was a foreigner at Anime Los Angeles, at least that's how the day started. By the time I had left, though, I had met a few people, picked up some new lingo, and had a good time. I crossed the line and now there was no way I could hide my secret obsession. I was now becoming a multi-faceted nerd.

—Liz Ohanesian







# LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

**"The Vegas squares stared at the punks. The punks gawked at Tiltwheel."**

## Born to Lose In the Gutter with Team Tiltwheel

### TILTWHEEL HAS A POSSE

For the past ten years, Tiltwheel has been traveling to Las Vegas to compete in the annual BYO Punk Rock Bowling Tournament. Unlike most teams, Tiltwheel doesn't aspire to bring the oversized first-place trophy home to San Diego. And they aren't in it to win a share of the substantial cash prizes.

Tiltwheel doesn't roll like that. Tiltwheel has their sights set much lower.

How low?

Dead last low.

Tiltwheel's run of perfectly bad bowling began in 1998. As the last-place team, they were awarded a box of dildos and gay porno videos. When they returned to San Diego, they had the wherewithal to sell their swag on eBay and earn enough money to buy a new catalytic converter for their van.

The story became something of a legend. They transformed their last-place finish from a joke into a badge of honor for the band and their fans, who celebrate each gutter ball, every empty frame as if it was the stuff of champions.

Tiltwheel missed the tournament in 2000, but they came back the next year with a vengeance. "It was the only year we tried to lose and it left a bitter taste in my mouth," Davey told me. Next year they vowed not to take losing so seriously.

Wine-stained dinosaurs and bearded nuns pranced about the lanes. Gutter balls were launched from atop pyramids of punks stacked four and five people high. Hot dogs were rammed down finger holes and hurled down the lane. Epic quantities of alcohol were consumed. A hell of a good time was had by all. The Vegas squares stared at the punks. The punks gawked at Tiltwheel.

But it wasn't all wine and roses. In 2003, the destruction of a video game, parts of which made their way onto the lane, resulted in Davey getting maced by a security guard at the Gold Coast Casino.

Davey admits that if he saw what security saw, "I'd think we were a bunch of thuggish douche bags, but we're not. We're dudes that want to go out and have fun."

From 2001 to 2006, Tiltwheel came in last, but their unprecedented string of "bad luck and bad timing," suffered a strange reversal of fortune at the tournament last year.

In a shocking turn of events, Team Tiltwheel was awarded second to last place.

Years of perfectly awful bowling had raised their handicaps so high that it put them at a competitive disadvantage against teams that were new to the tournament. Their futility on the lanes was so thorough that it worked against them.

Davey was disgusted.

"I've been a loser all my life. I even lose at losing."

This year, their staggering handicap put Tiltwheel in an unusual position. To reclaim their last-place crown, they knew they would have to go back to trying to lose, which Davey didn't want to do. But their enormous handicap gave them a legitimate shot at actually winning.

The prospect of a worst-to-first finish was sweetened by the possibility of winning the first-place prize of \$2,400. That's a lot of catalytic converters.

On the eve of their departure for the 2008 tournament, Davey still hadn't decided what to do: strive to lose or go for the whole enchilada.

"Isn't it great to have the luxury?"

Davey asked me, clearly excited by the opportunity. "What kind of jerky shit are we gonna get into?"

### THE FRIENDLIEST CASINO IN THE WEST

If the punk rock bowling tournament is a tornado, the Ram's Head bar in Mystic Falls Park at Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall is the eye of the storm.

For punk rockers who got beat up back in the '70s for cutting their hair or wearing earrings, the massive "Welcome Punk Rock Bowlers!" banners adorning the atrium must seem a little strange. My day job is in advertising, but even I thought the description of a specialty drink called a "Spiked Collar": "Bacardi & Coke: A Classic, Just Like Sid Vicious!" went too far.

Mystic Falls Park is a confusing place designed to look like a woodland scene, complete with animatronic beavers, mountain lions, and grizzly bears. Fake birds chirp in live trees. Real water splashes over faux rocks. By Vegas standards it's a peaceful place. Almost.

Every other hour between 6 and 10 p.m., the cry of a wolf signals the start of a laser light show with dancing fountains. The show culminates with a recording of "Proud to be an American" punctuated by the throaty cries

of hundreds of punks chanting, "U.S.A.! U.S.A." over and over again.

Once upon a time these were ironic cheers. After 9/11, they became borderline patriotic. Now they're mostly nostalgic.

The Ram's Head is Team Tiltwheel's unofficial tournament headquarters, the cynosure for their nationwide network of friends. It's impossible for Davey to pass through the falls without running into someone he knows.

Last year, Davey maintains, it took him seven hours to get from the edge of the fake forest to the actual bar. An exaggeration? Perhaps. But consider this: Davey is so enamored with Mystic Falls that in 2005 he got married there.

So it's only fitting that Team Tiltwheel was decamped at the Ram's Head Bar on Saturday night when the results from the first round of bowling were posted.

It was too loud to talk on the phone, but when the calls started coming in, Davey knew something momentous had happened.

Out of 168 teams, Tiltwheel had come in second.

Team Tiltwheel was going to the playoffs.

Team Tiltwheel was bowling for dollars.

### THE DIGNITY OF FAILING IN A VERY SPECIFIC WAY\*

Tiltwheel's emergence as a legitimate threat to win it all was the talk of the tournament. Could Tiltwheel win? Could they stay sober long enough to pull it off?

Team Tiltwheel showed up on Sunday morning with their game faces on and dressed for battle.

There were no bear suits or bunny costumes. They took their inspiration from the San Diego Chargers, who were facing the Patriots in the AFC Championships.

The band members painted their faces blue and gold. Davey took it several steps further by going shirtless and painting his paunch powder blue with gold letters that spelled out "DIEGO 21." He also sported a new hairdo: a shaved head with a crooked rat's tail. He called it a skullet.

Unfortunately for Tiltwheel, when they took to the lanes, they fared no better than the Chargers.

Their handicap had been adjusted to reflect the previous day's play. As a result, it dropped like the Dow during an oil shortage.





Davey was disgusted.

"I've been a loser all my life. I even lose at losing."

Team Tiltwheel didn't care. They came. They saw. They drank Cazadores. The posse passed around a jug of red wine, which they slung over their shoulder and drank hillbilly style like it was corn squeezings from a still.

Toward the end of the game, they performed their signature move: the human pyramid. Dozens of camera flashes went off, like it was Tom Brady throwing a record-setting touchdown.

There were no outbursts, no casualties, no breakdowns in social order. Tiltwheel played by the rules. Out of the thirty-two teams that advanced to the playoffs, Tiltwheel came in thirty-first.

What did it mean?

The key to navigating the tournament (i.e. life, or any trip to Las Vegas for that matter) is pacing one's self. This behavior—and I know I'm preaching to the choir here—is anathema to punk rock's core values: thou shall be loud, thou shall be fast, thou shall not fade away. Staying up late and making questionable decisions is what punk rockers *do*.

According to Tiltwheel's code, someone who separates him or herself from the fray of the tournament and its thousand and one excesses for the sake of a bowling score is the biggest loser of all.

Let's face it; regardless of whether you're trying to win or not trying to lose, if you're bitching about the score and are obsessing over the outcome, you've

lost something a lot more precious than a bowling game.

After Tiltwheel had been eliminated from the tournament, I asked Davey how he felt about what they'd accomplished. He stared at me with a blank expression on his face. I wondered if he'd heard the question. Music blasted over the speakers and the alley was alive with the cacophonous thunder of falling pins.

"I'm just happy that I can stand up right now."

And then someone dressed in filthy bird costume swooped down and took him away.

—Jim Ruland

\*Thanks, Todd!





SHIFTLESS WHEN IDLE

MADLY TIGHT PANTS

“Was Jesus  
in an emo  
band?”

# Beards, Torture Stakes, and Rat Cannibals!

## The Top Nine Most Bizarre Things about Jehovah's Witnesses!

Greetings once again, dear readers! I hope this column finds you busy jumping in bouncy castles, listening to Dee Dee Ramone's rap album (Dee Dee King is go!), and eating discontinued boxes of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cereal! In other words, I wish you good tidings! In response to the massive outpouring of positive responses from my previous column on Mormonism, catapulting me to worldwide fame as an expert in the world of “magical eyeglasses” and divining rods, I bring yet another look into one of the world's more ridiculous religions! Yes, yes, I know... all religions are ridiculous. Theologically speaking, I think a basic premise of all religions is something along the lines of, “Here's a bunch of crazy shit you can't prove.” But there's crazy shit and then there's... the Jehovah's Witnesses! Yes, you've seen the pamphlets. You may have even been accosted at your doorstep by a traveling Witness. But unless you are equally obsessed with bizarre/all religions, or have a sister writing her dissertation on same religion, I'm guessing you haven't come across the... Top Nine Most Bizarre Things About the Witnesses!

### 1. Facial Hair!

Ah, the important questions that all religions must sooner or later confront! Never mind matters of salvation, eternal life, or the morality of stealing Tootsie Roll Pops from your local convenience store! Let's head straightaway to the most pressing issues! We all know that beards have the potential to be kinda gross. (Of course, not as gross as moustaches, which an ex-boyfriend of mine once grew, in an ironic gesture that led me to question his coolness. Needless to say, the relationship did not last!) For several decades, the Witnesses acknowledged the somewhat icky nature of facial hair, and only produced pamphlets and books showing Jesus sans said hair. Then, suddenly, without warning (the definition of suddenly!), a 1968 edition of *Watchtower* (their official magazine) announced, “It is apparent that Jesus did wear

a beard, and so artistic representations of him in future Watch Tower publications will harmonize with the Scriptural evidence to that effect.” They based this newfound belief on Leviticus 19:27, stating, “Like all other Jews, Jesus was under obligation to keep the whole law. One of the commandments of the Law was: ‘You must not cut your side locks short around, and you must not destroy the extremity of your beard.’” (Note: the Bible is ridiculous!)

Beards were only the beginning for the Witnesses. In an issue of *Awake!* (another Witness publication), they pose the following crucial question: “Was the hair of Jesus long?” Answer? “Jesus was not a Nazirite. So he no doubt had his hair neatly clipped like any other Jewish male.” What a relief! Jesus was NOT, as most Christians apparently believe, a long-haired hippie! However...short-haired bearded Jesus? I have to ask the obvious question! Was Jesus in an emo band?

### 2. The End Times!

First of all, every good religion should predict the end times! Without the fear of Satan's wrath (and the ridiculousness of the four horsemen!), why bother believing in God? Thankfully, the Witnesses are *masters* at end time predictions. 1914! 1918! 1920! 1925! 1975! 1989! In the early 1920s, they published a book called *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, which delivered the warning, “The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures, even more clearly than that of 1914... We may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old [...] to the condition of human perfection.” Or try the following statement, released in 1968, “Just think, brothers, there are only about ninety months left before 6,000 years of man's existence on earth is completed... The majority of people living today will probably be alive when Armageddon breaks out, and there are no resurrection hopes for those who are destroyed then.” The Witnesses have also

claimed that Jesus has “invisibly returned,” after Jesus failed to, um, VISIBLY return.

### 3. Limited Opportunities for Salvation!

Witnesses believe only 144,000 people are members of the “spiritual Body of Christ” and can go to heaven. Most of these people are thought to have already lived and died. As of 2007, Witnesses claim that 9,105 chosen people are left, called “the remnant.” Everyone else is kinda screwed, but, if you're a good Witness, you get to live on the earth for 1,000 years when Jesus returns. Yay!

### 4. Torture Stakes!

The Witnesses reject the notion that Jesus died on a cross. The cross, they say, is a pagan symbol. Instead, Jesus died on an “upright torture stake.” Ah, the linguistic subtleties of religious discourse!

### 5. Religious Mansions!

Russell's successor, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, believing that the return of several Biblical prophets was imminent, did what any of us might: he built a mansion named Beth Sarim in San Diego to welcome them! And he bought a car specifically for the purpose of driving Isaac, David, and the others around! In 1930, Rutherford told *Time* magazine, “I have purposely landscaped the place with palm and olive trees so that these princes of the universe will feel at home.” Interestingly enough, in an interview with the *San Diego Sun*, Rutherford mentions that someone claiming to be King David *did* stop by, but he turned out to be an imposter. Rutherford told the newspaper, “One morning as I was going from the house to the garage, a queer looking creature approached me, tipped his dirty hat, and cried, ‘Howdy Judge, I'm David!’ ‘Go tell that to the winds,’ I told him, and he left without arguing the matter. I could see at a glance that he was not David. He didn't look like I knew David would look.” (Note: Was the fake David unbearded?) When the unthinkable



happened, and the real prophets did not pay a visit, the house was quietly sold.

#### 6. Miracle Wheat!

Before founding the Witnesses, Charles Taze Russell hawked what he called "miracle wheat," a grain he claimed would grow five times as fast as regular wheat. At sixty bucks a bushel, Sir Taze was ready to make a tidy profit! Sadly, it ended up growing more poorly than cheap, regular wheat, and Russell was sued. (Not to be dissuaded, Russell later promoted his own cure for cancer and yet another grain item, called the "millennial bean!")

#### 7. Rat Cannibals!

In 1929, the Witnesses, always interested in the important questions, published a pamphlet entitled "Getting Rid of Rats in Russia," containing the following useful information: "Soviet officials have discovered that a hundred rats, starved until ravenous, can be taught to eat smaller rats and finally to become rat cannibals. They are then turned loose in a city and clean it up in no time, after which they are themselves finished off with poison."

#### 8. Blood!

Many of you probably already know that Witnesses don't condone blood transfusions, but, fear not, there's a loophole! Although they reject whole blood cells, platelets, or plasma, they can accept smaller fractions of these materials. However, if that substance "makes up a significant portion of that component" or "carries out the key functions of a primary component," caution is urged. Note to self: I need to become a consultant for a ridiculous religion so I can spend my time debating the finer points of white blood cells!

#### 9. Cereal Restrictions!

Finally, in my scientific research of the Witnesses (i.e. reading while listening to the brain-stimulating sounds of the Barracudas!), I came across the following. I must preface this by saying that, you know, maybe it's not true. But it's so disturbing that even the POSSIBILITY that it's true is enough to warrant its mention. Yes, the Witnesses cannot eat Lucky Charms, the greatest cereal ever known to man! Due to its emphasis on magical creatures, the Witnesses dump it in with other pagan traditions (birthdays, Christmas, et al.), and have banished it from the breakfast table. To quote Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, "Oh, the horror!"

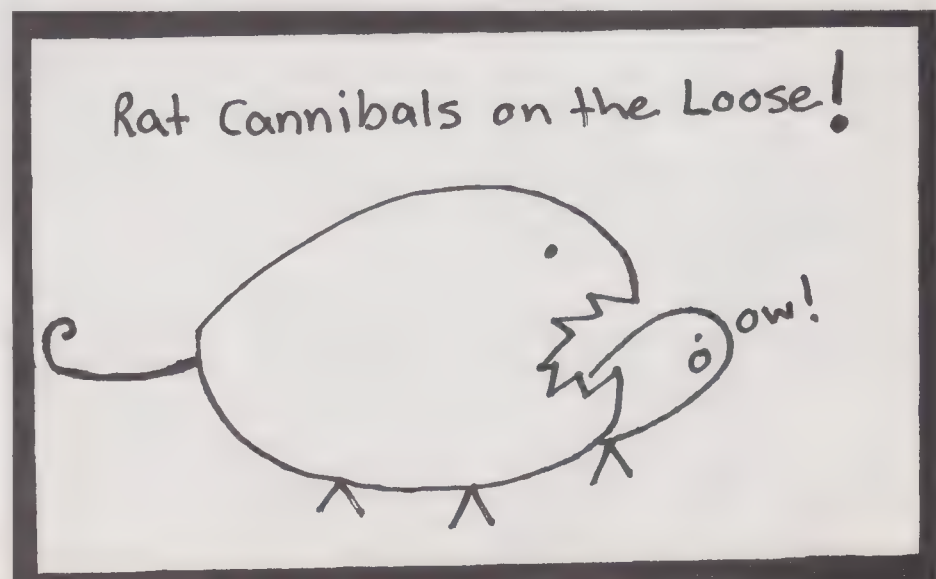
Please send complaints about the factual accuracy of this column to me, c/o Razorcake! In the meantime, look out for the baby Jesus while you're chomping on Lucky C!

—Maddy

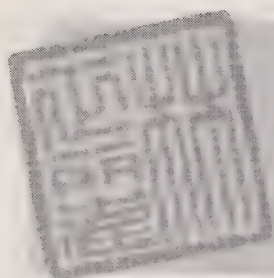


I think a basic premise of all religions is something along the lines of,

"Here's a bunch of crazy shit you can't prove."







## MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADY ZIE

**"At risk of sounding like a punk rock Amy Tan, my mom isn't stoked on me because I'm not Chinese enough."**

# Hyphen Dilemma

My mom isn't stoked on me. I've disappointed her.

I haven't failed her in normal daughter fashion, like appearing in a series of midget fetish porn and subsequently getting knocked up by a co-star only to squeeze out a child who is taller than baby daddy at birth, which makes the dude demand a paternity test. I'm forced to star in niche videos where I breastfeed middle-age men in order to make a couple bucks because baby formula ain't cheap. I'd understand if mom was bummed out on me because there's footage floating around of me with a little dude shoulder-deep in me, but, (un)fortunately for the general public, there isn't.

It's more abstract and less mature-audience-oriented than that. At risk of sounding like a punk rock Amy Tan, mom isn't stoked on me because, simply, I'm not Chinese enough.

By her estimation, I have seriously derailed my life. Not for all the reasons that would legitimately ruin one's life, like a gambling addiction or tweak habit, but because I'm a volunteer.

By nature of our capitalist society, where success and value is measured by one's annual gross income, I'm an obvious failure. I haven't filed taxes in two years because I didn't earn enough income to require it. I'm infinitely happier with my life than I was three years ago, toiling away for five-figures. But mom isn't amused. If she had it her way, I'd be living next door with a Chinese husband, earning a combined income that would buy shiny new cars and shiny new toys for our shiny yellow kids. Enough glare to blind the poverty out of any passerby. Instead, I'm hunkered in Bangladesh battling off malaria mosquitoes with what looks like an electroshock badminton racket and nursing intestinal parasites to sleep so that they won't ravage the dinner that has settled at the bottom of my belly.

Maybe if I were more Chinese, stuck around, and embraced domesticity, I'd be content.

I doubt it.

\*\*\*\*\*

New York's Museum of Modern Art has a free night every Friday during a small window of hours between four and eight. I was already running late, trying to get there by five, but didn't actually get off the train

until a quarter to seven. After I emerged from the subway station I asked a security guard for directions. We ended up having a lengthy conversation about birth order, traveling, developing nations, race, white privilege, etc. You know, the kinda stuff you get into when you need directions in an unfamiliar city.

"Let me ask you," he asked.

"Yeah?"

"Since we are on the topic of race. Can you tell me about the preponderance of Oriental..."

"Asian." I interjected without skipping a beat.

"...of Asian women who are with white men?"

This one is always difficult for me to field because it's difficult to explain that within this silly subculture that I'm involved in, the one with punks and zine nerds, there just aren't that many Asian dudes floating about. That the reason I haven't dated Asian dudes is because I just don't have many Asian friends in general.

"No, you are not being straightforward. You are not saying what you really think."

I didn't understand what he was getting at, until I recalled the earlier bits of our discussion.

"Holy shit," the light bulb flashed above my head. "You think it's because of privilege!"

He nodded emphatically. In all of my sociological meanderings, I've never once considered that my dating practices are deeply embedded in notions of power and privilege. I wonder if heterosexual white girls who go out with white dudes ever get floored with these types of questions? Who'da thunk that a fake cop at a subway station would school me on it?

\*\*\*\*\*

I was huddled by a crusty public phone in front of the Yueyang train station with a dirty handset pressed against my ear. It was toward the end of my year in Hunan, China, and I began taking trips out of my rural town into the capitol city over the weekends.

"I've got a half hour to kill before my train leaves," I told Amy Kirch.

We talked a few minutes before she asked about my train's departure time.

"It's at 7:30, so I'll get into Changsha at 9:30."

"Your train leaves at 7:30? But it's 7:30 now."

"Really? Oh shit!"

The train station clock was a half hour behind.

I ran to the waiting room and the K535 train was gone.

"Kai le," was all I was told when I asked the station attendants for help. Four middle-aged women in dark navy uniforms brushed me off by stating the obvious, telling me that the train had left. They kept talking at me as I repeated that I didn't understand, "Ting bu dong."

"Ting bu dong?" They all looked at me with the usual air of exasperation and disdain, the Hunanese snarl across their faces. With skepticism, they asked where I was from, "Ni zai nali lai?"

How was it possible that someone who looked like me, black hair, yellow skin and slanty eyes, how could I not understand that dialect-drenched version of Mandarin they were speaking?

I pushed through my frustration and flashed my toothiest smile and said, "Mei guo."

Typically this is met with contempt, but my cheesy grin worked because their snarly façade faded long enough to explain that I had to go back to the ticket window and exchange my ticket for the next train.

When I returned to the waiting room, the ladies chatted me up with routine questions about why I was in China. I explained that I was a Chinese-American, volunteer English teacher at a middle school.

One of the women eyeballed me from the top of my black hair down to my tattered canvas Vans sneakers (Made in the USA!). I expected her to criticize my appearance, about my weight, or how I could afford better shoes. She puckered her lips and furrowed her brow, like she was taste-testing a piece of candy and contemplating all of the varied flavors.

She nodded slowly and said, "Hai ke yi. Bu cuo." Acceptable. Not bad.

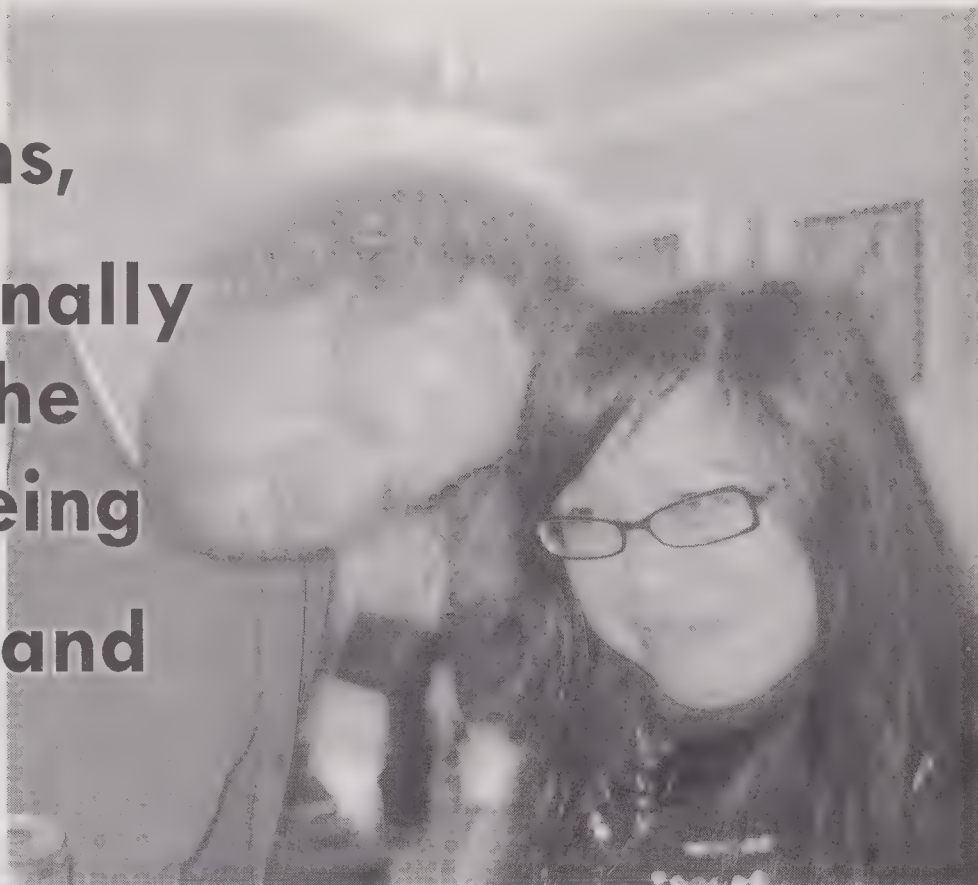
I couldn't believe my lil' yellow ears. I finally got the *Hai ke yi, Bu cuo* lines!

Being told that you're acceptable and not bad doesn't sound like much of a compliment in the States, but in China it's the most flattering because the understatement leaves room for modesty.

"Nali, nali," I said as a polite "Oh, not true..."



# It only took eight months, but I was finally bestowed the honor of being acceptable and not bad in China.



Beefcat attacks the Monster of Fun with a headful of honkey. Self portrait.

I said that my Mandarin was still really poor, but she pointed out that I could understand a lot. She was probably more impressed with me being in China than with my spoken Chinese. Maybe she figured that I had a plentiful life in the States, but I gave up basement house shows and trivia night at the Pub to come teach their kids for less than 1/10th of what I used to earn in Los Angeles.

"Hai ke yi le," she repeated.

It only took eight months, but I was finally bestowed the honor of being acceptable and not bad in China. For the first time in Hunan, I felt comfortable as a Chinese-American.

\*\*\*\*\*

Two nights later, we went to 4698 to catch an underground hip-hop show. The performers were Canto rappers from Guangzhou called Dumdue. A surreal moment came when everyone raised their fists, à la Black Panther pride, for their motherland.

Following their set, we were loitering outside the club when we met Will, who was tagging along with Dumdue. Will's English was great. I was convinced that he was an undercover Chinese-American, which he denied.

Will used to have a real job, but now he "don't gotta deal with no motherfuckers."

He's an entrepreneur. He objected to being called a drug dealer.

"I hook people up. That's what I do."

We nodded.

"Niggas gotta live!" He added.

While discussing illicit substances in the Middle Kingdom, I said that I'd never do Chinese LSD.

"I don't trust that shit," I said.

"It's because you're American," he replied with a condescending tone emphasized on my nationality.

During my time in China, I've always thought nothing of this accusation. I was more miffed when folks negated my Americanness because of how much I looked like them. I was so busy defending the red, white, and blue part of my identity that I was never bothered by those who questioned my yellowness.

"But I'm Chinese too."

In high school, I was called a Twinkie and a Banana—yellow on the outside and white on the inside—because I didn't drive a Honda Civic and my interests reached beyond getting into college and being in an Asian gang. The names didn't bother me then neither.

"Nah, you American."

There was something about a third-rate Chinese drug dealer, who was trying to sell dried clumps of mediocre weed, refusing to acknowledge my Chineseness that really burned. Especially since I was finally praised with the coveted *hai ke yi* and *bu cuo* compliments.

"You're saying that I'm not Chinese at all?" I was appalled and followed with this gem, "But I grew up eating rice everyday!"

He wasn't impressed. "You're

American. You didn't grow up here. Our lives are different."

Touché.

I wonder if he spent an entire school year hiding in the girl's bathroom during his fourth grade P.E. class to get away from Richard Sanchez's relentless stream of racial slurs. Has Will ever suffered the indignity of pretending like he didn't understand the bigotry shouted from a truck, adorned with a confederate flag sticker, so that he wouldn't have to translate it for his parents? When was the last time someone denied Will's family's history, their struggles that run through bloodlines and darkened their yellow skins, based on his birthplace?

"You don't think I'm even a little Chinese?" I was having a conniption fit. Our debate about my ethnic identity was triggered by my refusal to use sub-par Chinese hallucinogens. The situation was beyond ridiculous, but I still wanted him to acknowledge me as a bonafide Chinker.

"Okay, a little," he conceded. I think he saw the sadness in my slanty eyes and pitied my American-passport totin' ass.

—Amy Adoyzie  
amyadoyzie.com



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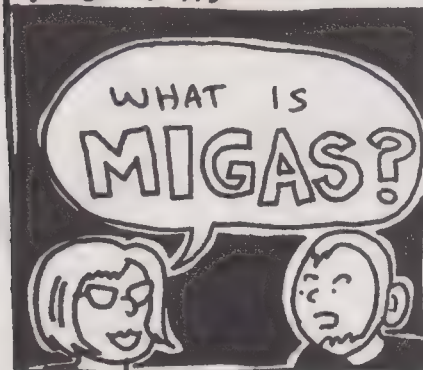


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MY TWENTY-EIGHTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

A LOT OF MY NON-TEXAN FRIENDS ASK ME...



ACCORDING TO WIKIPEDIA, MIGAS IS ORIGINALLY A TRADITIONAL SPANISH DISH



IT MIGRATED WEST AND MUTATED INTO A TEX-MEX BREAKFAST STAPLE.



THE SPANISH CONQUISTADORE ATE IT DURING LENT, SINCE IT HAS NO MEAT IN IT.



HERE'S HOW TO MAKE TEXAS STYLE MIGAS...



FIRST, MIX THE EGGS AND MILK IN A BOWL AND ADD A LITTLE HOT SAUCE.



MELT THE BUTTER IN A SKILLET, POUR IN THE EGGS AND WAIT A MINUTE



WHEN THE EGGS START TO SET, TOSS IN THE HANDFUL OF TORTILLA CHIPS (CRUSH EM UP A LITTLE BIT)



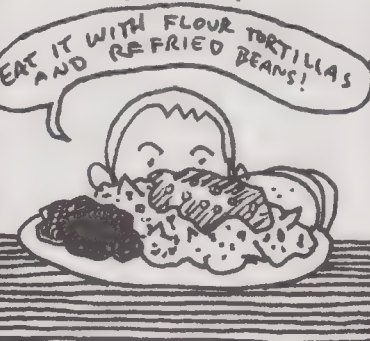
MIX IT ALL UP AND LET IT COOK FOR A FEW MORE MINUTES. DUMP THE CHEESE IN THERE, TOO.



WHEN THE CHIPS ARE SOFT, BUT NOT SOGGY, REMOVE IT FROM HEAT.



PUT SALT + PEPPER + LOTS OF SALSA ON IT, AND ENJOY.



WHEN IN AUSTIN, BE SURE AND TRY THE INCREDIBLE MIGAS AT TAMALES HOUSE (ON THE CORNER OF AIRPORT + 51ST)



THANKS + LOVE TO MEGAN PANTS FOR THE COLUMN IDEA!!



# POWER POP POLICE

REV. NARB

**“America WAS  
founded on  
ketchup.”**

## AMERICAN CONDIMENT APOCALYPSE OR

FUCKIN-A, HOW COME EVERY TIME YOU TRY TO TRIM YOUR EYEBROWS YOU  
FUCK IT ALL UP ((AND THEN DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN SIX MONTHS LATER))  
or even

I CAN SEE FOR MILES ((BECAUSE I HACKED MY FUCKIN' EYEBROWS ALL UP))

So, anyway, i'm at the dentist, and i'm reading *Popular Science*, because that's how me and my coefficient of starting friction roll. It appears that Heinz®—the same intrepid crew who brought you John Kerry and Ronald Reagan!—are in the process of developing a bioengineered tomato that is 10% sweeter than the norm. The reason behind the genesis of this veritable *Tomata DuPlenty*? America's newfound infatuation with biofuels has inflicted an acute corn syrup shortage on our once proud and saucy nation, and corn syrup, i'll have you know, is the number three ingredient in ketchup. Worse yet, it's also the *number two* ingredient in ketchup. Go look at a ketchup label if you think this is some wiggy festivity of the brain on my part, it's true! **TOMATO CONCENTRATE, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, CORN SYRUP, VINEGAR, SALT, ONION POWDER, SPICE, NATURAL FLAVORS, THANK YOU FOR COMING, GOOD NIGHT.** So. Let me get this straight. In his eight years in office, George W. Bush has started a war, sent four thousand troops to their deaths, destroyed our economy, ruined our standing in the international community, presided over the greatest terrorist attack in American history, blown thru the largest budget surplus AND rung up the biggest budget deficit in history, shot gas prices through the roof AND imperiled our nation's ketchup supply? **GOD DAMMIT, I DRAW THE LINE AT IMPERILING OUR NATION'S KETCHUP SUPPLY!!!** We don't have enough fucking KETCHUP to go around??? Our national ketchup reserves are just goddamn TAPPED OUT??? We're short on KETCHUP??? **WE'RE FUCKING SHORT ON FUCKING KETCHUP???** Who the FUCK is this fucking dillwad, and how the fuck has he managed to fuck things up to the extent that even our goddamned KETCHUP isn't safe anymore??? I mean, not to put too fine a point on it, but **WHAT THE FUCK??!** Dude, this is AMERICA. **NOBODY** fucks with our ketchup ((America is an odd country. If you shoot a man, people will ask you if you had a good reason for it. If you shoot a dog, you'll be hung off of the flagpole at Perkins® and set alight by torch-and-pitchfork bearing villagers. Fucking with

our national ketchup supply is presumed to be just slightly less offensive than shooting a dog in mainstream American society; however, the fact that no one up til now has ever been dumb enough to actually DO so currently restricts this conjecture to the realms of pure theory)). There used to be this kid named Earl who lived in my neighborhood when i was growing up, and he was a TOTAL fuckup ((how big of a fuckup? He grew up to be some kind of city councilman, who made genius remarks in city council meetings about how taxpayers are “smart” to try and “protect their homes” by keeping Mexicans out of their neighborhoods, then called a local sports radio call-in show under an alias to rail about how the local women's basketball coach was unfit to have her contract extended because she was a lesbian. The radio dudes actually got some kind of FBI voice-figurer-outer device and identified Earl as the caller. Not particularly surprisingly, Earl didn't last long in public office. Earl is also one of the only—actually, THE only—person i can say this about: I used to beat him up when we were kids. Where the fuck was i going with this? Oh, right, Earl was pretty much the biggest fuckup ever. True dat)), but, one day, when someone or another wasn't putting ketchup on their hamburger, Earl said “*It's un-American to not like ketchup. AMERICA WAS FOUNDED ON KETCHUP!*” Earl was and is a fuckup of Bushian proportions, but in this sole item, he was completely correct: America WAS founded on ketchup. I don't even know what that means, really, BUT I KNOW IT'S THE GODDAMN GOSPEL TRUTH! So, here's the deal, as i understand it: Gas prices have more than doubled ((even adjusting for inflation)) since Bush took office ((that's right, little kids. MORE THAN DOUBLED. Shit, when Boris toured the south in 1998, gas was UNDER A DOLLAR in parts of Texas. That's a GALLON, not a liter!)), so we started a war so we could get more oil and have cheaper gas. Well, GODDAMMIT, we're FIVE YEARS INTO THIS THING, and gas prices are HIGHER THAN EVER!!! What the fuck, dude, you killed four thousand people and i'm still payin' \$3.29 a gallon! How much would it have been if you *didn't* kill those four

thousand other dudes? Like \$3.31 a gallon or something? I'LL PAY THE EXTRA TWO CENTS, GO GET US THE DEAD DUDES BACK! No deal! No deal! So we don't have any oil, and we started a war to get more oil, and we now somehow apparently have even less oil than we started out with, which is what the gamers call an “epic fail.” So then we decided we're gonna make fuel out of pappy's corn squeezins, which is actually pretty good thinking, because i fucking HATE corn. It's like my least favorite food. I'd rather drink a cup of smooth, refreshing 10W-30 oil than eat a cob o' corn any ol' day of the week! So now gas prices are still sky-high, we don't have any oil, AND we don't have any corn, either. WELL, WHAT THE FUCK? How the fuck do we not have any CORN, for Chrissakes? HOW THE FUCK EXACTLY DO YOU RUN AMERICA OUT OF CORN??? What the hell, man? Did Nebraska secede from the Union or something? ((i mean, i know i once said that they SHOULD secede from the Union, i just wasn't aware that they had actually gone and DONE it yet)) We have NO CORN??? What the fuck DO we have??? What have we got? ((“*We've got you!*” Oops, gratuitous Sham 69 reference. Street cred, yo)) We have no oil, no ketchup, and no corn. Now THAT takes a special talent. And guess what? **WE DON'T HAVE ANY FUCKING PIZZA CRUSTS, EITHER.** I read that in the paper the other day. We don't have enough WHEAT to make the goddamn pizza crusts because EVERYBODY IS PAYING THE FARMERS TO GROW CORN instead. Well, i dunno whom the fuck i need to talk to about this, but these fucking farmers paid to grow corn instead of pizza crusts are OBVIOUSLY doing a PRETTY GODDAMN SHITTY job of it, since, as indicated previously, we don't HAVE ANY FUCKING CORN. Then again, i don't know what we'd do with the fucking pizza crusts if we had them, because we probably don't have any tomato sauce to put on 'em anyway. I mean, how the FUCK do you run the country out of pizza, gas, and ketchup AND kill four thousand Americans in the process ((that is, apart from a REALLY fuckin' boss road trip))? Is it mathematically possible to do a worse job? What's he gonna do next, garnish our SweetTarts®? Invent a



military vehicle that runs on Taco Bell™ Fire Sauce ((but hold the reinforced undercarriage! It ruins the taste of those moist and tender IEDs!))?? Claim eminent domain on the nation's marshmallow groves??? This nation has gone to the goddamn dogs, man! ((which i suppose will briefly stave off any surely impending dog food shortage, but still...!)) Can't somebody build an engine that runs on legitimately unneeded items we have in great supply? Something nobody will miss? *Spam emails from avaaaz.org? Joanna Angel porn? Chicago pop-punk singles?* Make a fucking jet that flies on mashed-up copies of Halo 3™! Make a "Frampton Comes Alive" powered warp engine! I was in a Pizza Hut® in Hong Kong™ once. The locals—presumably attempting to release the inner American which dwelled deep within their Asian bosoms—were topping their pizza with ketchup. I laughed at them at the time, but right now the Hong Kong Pizza Hut® is looking like the land of milk and honey, except by "milk" i really mean "pizza" and by "honey" i really mean "ketchup." But, i mean, seriously, how do you make such a shambles of things that some Asian dork dousing his corn-and-tuna topped 'za slice with ketchup looks like the Monopoly® man lighting a cigar with a fifty dollar bill by comparison??? I mean, did Bush PLAN this??? Is he going for a Guinness™ World Record® of some sort? Does he think approval ratings are kind of like taking a breathalyzer™ test, where the closer you get to triple zeroes, the better? And what the fuck is this bullshit about the housing market? Real estate values are "plummeting?" **MY ASS THEY ARE!** If real estate values are "plummeting," HOW COME MY PROPERTY TAXES NEVER GO DOWN??? How come when i get my property tax bill, my house is always worth THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS MORE than it was last year??? This "Mortgage Crisis" bullshit is a bunch of fuckin' MALARKEY. Tell me if i got this wrong: A bunch of dipshits bought houses in "hot" housing markets. Let's say they paid \$150,000 at the time. *Property values were skyrocketing!* Their houses were suddenly worth \$200,000! \$250,000! \$300,000! ((don't look at me, i don't expect my tin hizzy to hit six digits for another ten years or so)) These fucking ASSHOLES went and borrowed money against what they THOUGHT their houses were worth, then they found out that their houses WEREN'T worth what they thought they were worth and then they couldn't pay back the money. Or some bullshit similar to but perhaps not exactly identical to that ((and uninteresting enough that i do not care to inspect the matter further)). THE OPERATIVE PHRASE, kids, is that they BORROWED MONEY. What the FUCKING FUCK are these FUCKING FUCKERS borrowing FUCKING MONEY for??? **YOU JUST BOUGHT A \$150,000 HOUSE, YOU FUCKS!!! YOU OWE MONEY OUT THE FUCKING ASS!!! YOU HAVE A THIRTY YEAR MORTGAGE, YOU FUCKING IMBECILES!!!** If you buy a \$150,000 house ((where i live, you can still get a pretty swank house for \$150,000, so adjust this for local

market conditions if necessary)), **YOU SPEND YOUR TIME FIGURING OUT HOW YOU'RE GONNA PAY BACK THE MONEY YOU ALREADY OWE.** You DON'T go think of new jag-off ways that you can **BORROW MORE FUCKING MONEY.** These people DESERVE to be broke. They DESERVE to be homeless. Truth be told, not many people honestly deserve to be broke or homeless. But these fucking morons do. If you have enough money to buy a nice fucking house and you fuck it up because you decided it was a better idea to try and borrow against your home equity to buy a Hummer™ or a Beemer® or a Bummer™ ((or whatever the fuck it is that someone with a swank fuckin' house would borrow money for)) than to pay back your house loan, **YOU, sir, are a fucking TWIT who DESERVES the misfortunes ladled upon him.** I mean, what the

fuck, i just want ketchup, pizza, and either peace or cheap gasoline ((either one is OK by me)), is that too much to ask? **IS THIS NOT MY BIRTHRIGHT AS AN AMERICAN???** Instead, all i get are promises from Heinz® that they will invent a self-ketchuping tomato on my behalf. Bah. In that same issue of *Popular Science*, i also read that scientists in England were able to grow bacon in a Petri dish by adding glucose to pig stem cells, and they expect to have artificial bacon in stores by 2010. **AMERICA'S SECRET SHAME:** *President Nimrod has not only run the country out of ketchup and pizza, but his anti-stem cell policy has caused us to lose the Bacon Race to the fucking LIMEYS.* Read my lips: **WORST PRESIDENT EVER.**

Love,  
Norb





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# THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

"Around 3 AM, I had an entire Polish dance club chanting 'Gay BAR! Gay BAR! Gay BAR! Gay BAR!'"

## For Americans in Eastern Europe, The Party's Over

The Dinghole Reports  
By The Rhythm Chicken  
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)  
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

So, older folks will sometimes ask, "What were you doing when you heard that JFK had been shot?" In more recent times, people will sometimes ask, "What were you doing when you heard about the 9/11 attacks?" Decades from now, I'm sure people will be asking the question, "So, what were you doing when you heard about Brett Favre retiring?" I was enjoying a cheap Czech red wine with breakfast in Prague, checking my email. No less than twenty emails from back home informed me of the soul-shattering news, half of them declaring their suicide watch on the other half. The collective Wisconsin condition is truly in a transitional phase.

Backing up a little bit, once again I was given the month of March off. I immediately went online and got my ticket back to Poland. I'd been stuck in this shithole country for two years and was ready to return to the seat of civilization, Eastern Europe. Within a few weeks, I had a rough travel plan and my rucksack was packed. The Rhythm Chicken was ready to tour around the world yet again!

Leaving Sister Bay under many feet of snow, I first stopped in Milwaukee for a night of brewtown ruckus with the roller derby chicks! The next day I flew out, leaving America and all its new problems behind. After landing in Krakow, I spent thirty-six hours dealing with bank/ATM problems and jetlag till I boarded a train to Prague. There I was greeted by Paul Drake and actually started to unwind. My first night there, we went to my favorite Prague venue, Klub 007, where some NYC band called the Black Dice was playing. The beer was tasty and cheap. The band was absolutely unlistenable. My remaining few days in Prague were spent relaxing. Paul gave me his copy of Frank Portman's *King Dork* to read during my travels.

(Okay, Euro-Chicken. This isn't *Lonely Planet*. Where's the mayhem? Where's the punk rock? Where are the untamed antics? - F.F.)

I boarded the bus to Ceske Budejovice, home of Budvar (or Czechvar, if you will), the original Budweiser. There I caught another bus to the amazing hidden medieval town of Cesky Krumlov. If you've seen the movie *The Illusionist*, you've seen Cesky Krumlov,

my new favorite town in the world. My last night there I happened upon a back alley self-proclaimed gypsy bar! The band inside was amazing: guitarist, upright bassist, violinist, and trumpeter, all singing, and absolutely tearing the place up, gypsy style. Later that night, I ended up enjoying a few nightcaps in the lounge under my accommodation. The gypsy band showed up and soon a fight broke out right in front of me. The Czechs are not very fond of the gypsies, and they let this be known with their fists. After seeing this, I find it difficult feeling sorry for privileged American kids whose cutting-edge counter-culture bands don't get the respect they deserve.

[Well then, Mr. Chicken. Is this when our hero busted out the riot rhythms, bringing justice to the downtrodden of Bohemia? - Dr. S.]

The next morning was on a train back to Ceske Budejovice, where I caught another train to Linz, Austria, where I caught another train to Vienna, where I caught another train to Budapest. It was a long day of watching middle-Europe roll by and reading *King Dork*. In Budapest, Veronika the Croatian met me and helped me settle in with a warm dinner and a room. Budapest is like a parallel NYC set into the foothills, complete with a language that sounds baffling to this Wisconsinite. When in Budapest, I would recommend frequenting the "For Sale Pub," across from the VaszarCarnok. It's the Hungarian answer to Homer, Alaska's Salty Dawg Saloon! The tour was starting to gain momentum!

After three days and nights in Budapest, I caught a train back to Vienna where I caught a budget flight to Sofia, Bulgaria. There, Mariana (a Bulgarian friend of a Bulgarian friend), was my guide for five days in my new most interesting country. While in Bulgaria I saw Sofia, Plovdiv, and Kostenetz. We even hiked up nearby Mount Vitosha. Mariana told me my favorite story of the entire month. Apparently, some months ago G.W. Bush made a diplomatic visit to Sofia, greeting the newcomer to the European Union. While unexpectedly shaking hands with a crowd of pedestrians outside his hotel, some common Bulgarian street thief had the balls to STEAL THE PRESIDENT'S WATCH, and he got away with it! It's truly a feather in the cap of the common Bulgarian street thief!

(So, Bulgaria is where you finally unleashed your rhythmic chaos, right? - F.F.)

I caught a night flight back to Vienna, where I spent an agonizing eleven hours in the ghost town airport Vienna International is on a Sunday night. The morning of St. Patrick's Day, I finally caught my connector flight back to Krakow. I had to quick run around town on a few errands before returning to the airport to welcome Door County's own Dr. Phil. Once walking out the gate, he was handed a Zywiec tallboy and the Irish liver abuse had begun. We secured a cheap room and fell into the Irish pub where we soon meshed with a group of rowdy Norwegians and continued to burn the winter witch! Around three AM, I had an entire Polish dance club chanting "Gay BAR! Gay BAR! Gay BAR! Gay BAR!" I'm not quite sure if they understood what they were chanting. Somehow we woke up in our room well into the next day. The next four days in the mountains south of Krakow were somewhat of a blur.

(Okay, Chicken! So when do you actually drop the rhythm bomb over there? - F.F.)

On Good Friday, I caught another train to Prague, where I bought more Czech wine and caught the next train to Dresden. My Easter weekend was to be in Frohburg, my all-time favorite German burg. The Chancellor took me to the *Frohschoppen*, a Frohburg tradition which only occurs on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. All the men in town gather in the morning at the *Schutzenhaus* (the rifle club) banquet hall to sit at long tables and drink morning beers while the Frohburg fire department band plays polkas on the stage! We even sat across the table from the Frohburg bergermeister! This was truly too cool for words. Easter night was spent around a fireplace with Czech wine, discussing the recent sightings of the infamous Wolperdinger.

The next morning, I caught the train in Leipzig, which took me back to Krakow, where I resettled for a few days before catching a bus up to Plock, near Warsaw. In Plock, I once again met Wojtek, singer-guitarist for Wiewiorczaki (the Squirrel Guys). He met me wearing a Chinese Telephones T-shirt, making this road-weary Wisconsinite feel strangely at home. My month overseas was drawing to a close. The tour was almost complete.

[Wait one minute, WHAT tour? So, you finally played in Plock, right? Just like two years ago? Where was it, Pub Grodzki? - Dr. S.]





PAUL WANISH

After a long bus ride back to Krakow, I enjoyed a few final days in Krakow. A few nights of frequenting Pizzeria Cyklop, Irish Arms, Stary Port, and CK Browar were exactly what the doctor ordered. My last day in Krakow was spent quite hung over, lying in the hot sun on a stone bench in the Wawel castle courtyard, listening to ugly American tourists mill about between intermittent naps. After a crazy month of planes, trains, buses, and a few half-marathons of walking, it was a well deserved day-long siesta. It was soon time to bid Poland a sad farewell.

(So, how was this a Chicken tour if you didn't even perform once? – F.F.)

I caught a quick flight back to Vienna where I spent the night.

[Okay, so you played in VIENNA, right? – Dr. S.]

My one night in Vienna cost the same as a WEEK in Poland! In commenting on the U.S. dollar's current flimsy worldwide status, my friend Paul Drake put it best when he said, "For Americans in Eastern Europe, the party's over!" In the month of March, I watched the Euro go from being worth \$1.52 to \$1.59. It doesn't really show any signs of slowing down. Makes me wish I would've bought a shitload of Euros back in 2000 when they were eighty-nine cents apiece.

(Okay, Mr. Wall Street. Where's the ruckus? This so-called "tour" seems to be no more than a pleasure trip. – F.F.)

So, Austrian Airlines lulled me in their maximum comfort flight back to Chicago, where I caught a bus up to Milwaukee.

[Right, Milwaukee. So THAT'S where your "tour" finally commenced? – Dr. S.]

I spent two quality days in Milwaukee, once again going through an intense program of re-Americanization, complete with lots of beer, cheese, and fried everything! Yesterday, I finally rolled back into Sister Bay, which brings us to...

Dinghole Report #92: Ruckus from Around the World, IN MY FRONT YARD! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #414)

It was a sunny afternoon in early April. The temperature was a pleasant forty-nine degrees. The barometric pressure was forgiving. A slight breeze trickled through the leafless trees. I had left Sister Bay one month ago under numerous feet of snow, and despite the blizzard they got twenty-four hours ago, spring was here and keeping the white cold cover at bay. My entire month of March was one big wind-up, leading to the tour's one solitary gig, MY OWN HOMECOMING GIG IN MY OWN FRONT YARD!

(This is really wearing thin, Chickenman. Do you really think Razorcake HQ is gonna buy this? – F.F.)

Let me explain! Due to the recent Wisconsin condition, I couldn't possibly

treat the European continent to my glorious ruckus rhythms until I returned to my home tundra and paid homage to the GREATEST QUARTERBACK EVER TO PLAY THE GAME! Yes, this was my chicken gig honoring the one and only Brett Favre! He brought glory back to Green Bay, back to Wisconsin, and broke nearly every record in the book.

[(ALL HAIL BRETT FAVRE!!! – Dr. S. & F.F.)]

The actual gig, though intensely glorious in intent, was not the real barn-burner that the big #4 deserved. Only one truck passed by. It was my new neighbor a mile up the road who has a "Duck-a-holic" sticker in his truck's back window. I'm assuming he's a hunter. The red squirrel who lives in my woodshed's attic was out hopping from tree to tree, looking down on the honorary gig. I'm sure he'll report to the Wiewiorczaki.

My final "song" was a slightly altered Beatles cover. I stared out of my chicken eyeholes at my friend the squirrel while charismatically repeating the words, "Number Four, Number Four, Number Four, Number Four, Number Four,..."

–Rhythm Chicken  
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com





I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DATE

"Shit's corny, son!  
We're talking on-  
the-cob grade!"

# Artists to Say "Fuck You" to

Hollywood can be a strange bird. Make that a *very* strange bird. A whole lot of head-scratchers have emerged from what's internationally known as the "Entertainment Capitol of the World" that make even the most casual movie/music fan stop and take a crooked-eye's worth of notice. Don't get the wrong idea; I think there's been some time-enduring film classics and records that were born unto the world out of this place of my birth (yeah, you heard right, yours truly and his two siblings are 100% bonafide Hollyweird deliverers). But being who I am, I just can't dismiss some of the whoppers that snuck past the industry bigwigs' decision and judgement and found their way onto an unsuspecting audience.

For reasons unexplained, there's some weird law of physics that allows musicians to take a crack at acting, some with great success, while actors who try to take on the recording studio flop horribly, painting a ginourmous ridicule target on their shoulders for everyone to take aim at. Some of these musical flops scream, "What the hell were you thinking?" while other failures can even make the most avid fan feel uncomfortably confused, creeped out, even. Did you ever come to a point in your life when you're faced with a situation in which one of your best friends is about to do something *really* fucking stupid? And no matter *how* much you try and talk sense into this friend, you feel like it's getting to the point of literally having to slap some sense into 'em? The following examples are of actors trying to break into the music biz, just asking for a dozen or so said slaps upside the head...

**William Shatner:** I just had to start with the pugnacious (thanks, Art!) Bill Shatner. I mean, come on, the first four letters in his last name alone bring to mind the past tense of someone who just pumped a squat. It was in 1968 when Capt. Kirk unveiled this full-length monstrosity of himself reading pop lyrics, prose, and poetry to instrumental backing music, aptly titled *The Transformed Man*. Not only does this LP get the Gary Hornberger thumbs-down, but it gave a lot of used record stores something new to file into the comedy bins. It's bad, so hysterically bad. I vividly remember the summer I stumbled upon some of Shatner's material and played his take on "Mr. Tambourine Man" over and

over in my old apartment until Art, Gary, and I almost pissed ourselves laughing so hard. So screw *Star Trek* and screw his *Priceline* TV spots; this record has yanked it all away from him, even some forty years later. But I'll always give Capt. Jerk kudos for his acting in the forever badass *Twilight Zone* television series that Rod Serling created in TV's golden years. You happy, Trekkies?

**Steven Seagal:** Yes, it's the same slicked-back, pony-tailed goof who tucked his shirt/sweater into his smanly-tight, hiked-up jeans and starred in such (ahem) action flicks like *Hard To Kill* and *Marked for Death*. Seagal likes the blues, it seems, and in 1996 he actually released a full record (of shit) to appease even the most doubting of his Hollywood peers called *Mojo Priest*. Dude, the disc is beyond ridiculous and sounds like a blues-yelping Randy Newman (the same awful human who penned such downers as "Short People" and "I Love L.A."). And yes, Seagal tries his damndest to re-record blues staples like "Dust My Broom" on this LP of horrors. Motherfucker, if you're going to take a shot at a famous Robert Johnson classic, you best do it justice or hang it up and call it a day. Of all the nerve—I can picture the ghost of Robert Johnson now, visiting Seagal's room while he's sleeping and planting the samurai sword hanging above his bed into his chest. Oh, you could really care less about his disgracing the blues? What about that other fine and dandy LP of Segal's entitled *Songs from the Crystal Cave*? How's the name grabbing you? Uh-huh, cocko, I thought so. File under "fired."

**Bruce Willis:** Like Steve Seagal, Bruce Willis has yearned for years to show the world that he indeed has the chops to be a stand-out, modern day, white-boy blues man. NO. I don't care if his *The Return of Bruno* LP puked onto the scene some twenty-plus years ago. It still *Sucks Hard* (to borrow from one of his films). I really think that "Bruno" secretly wishes he were Bruce Springsteen, to tell you the truth, or at least one of his E Street Band members. It ain't never gonna happen, Brucey, so just be concerned with whatever movie project you got happenin' and continue to worry whether or not Aston Kutcher is gonna start handling your daughter once she becomes of age. Who knows, Aston may even ditch your ex and become your new

son-in-law! Wouldn't that be a kick in the ass? So put the harmonica down, dumbass. Nobody cares, not even the crowds gathered outside the grand openings of those asinine Planet Hollywoods.

**David Hasselhoff:** Okay, let's get it all out on the table. His biggest claims to TV fame were his role alongside a talking, crime-fighting Pontiac Firebird in *Knight Rider* (don't even get me started about the current re-make) and his role as some fangled lifeguard in *Baywatch*, which painted a very bullshit picture that all So Cal folk live on or by the beach, and that most women here have blonde hair that's as fake as the rack they paid top dollar for. Man, *fuck* that show. I'm proud to say I never made it through a single episode. The Hoff has recently been found out as a recovering sauceman, trying to get his act together and staying put on the wagon, thanks to a YouTube clip depicting his slurring self messily mowing down a hamburger off a hotel room floor. TV and personal life horrors aside, he's managed to make quite a killing peddling his pooppy brand of pop star pap to the masses over in Europe, most successfully in Germany and Austria. Strange thing is, most Europeans have a bit more tolerance and/or open-mindedness when it comes to the music game, but somehow The Hoff has fallen through the cracks of the most discriminating tastes across the pond. And we aren't talking about a few select fan clubs in these countries—we're talking huge, sold-out shows and astounding record sales. But if you've ever heard The Hoff sing, you'd be scratching your head as much as I am.

Don't believe me? In 2004, he released an all-covers LP called *Sings America*. Included gems are Hoff's take on "Rhinstone Cowboy," "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'," "California Girls," "New York, New York," and the Manson Family-style butchering of Neil Diamond's "Forever in Blue Jeans." Has he any originals, you ask? Oh, hells yes! A single released in 1996 called *Jump in My Car*, complete with him posed in front of said Firebird spoken about earlier. Shit's corny, son! We're talking on-the-cob grade! Listen Hoff, you do what ya gotta do over Europe way, but don't be releasing any damn record called *Sings America*, 'cause we already have enough problems keeping face with the rest of the world without you adding insult to injury, capiche?



**Russell Crowe:** As much as I loved his superb acting as Bud White in the must-see film *L.A. Confidential*, Crowe gets the big goose egg (thanks, Torrez) when it comes to rocking the stage. *30 Odd Foot of Grunts* was his last venture into the musical unknown and his newest band offering, Russell Crowe And The Ordinary Fear Of God is back to wow the college crowds lost in the fog, bumping into one another in that same unknown. File this next to *Dave Matthews Band* (which is located inside the main index file that reads, "ARTISTS TO SAY 'FUCK YOU' TO"). I'd be mighty afraid of the big lord above, too, if I were trying to pass off such douchebaggery as this. Wrongful attempts to rope in movie fans to your "band" gigs should be considered a federal offense. (Didn't Keanu Reeves give it the ol' college try like this with Dogstar? Yikes.) If Crowe had any sense of humor, he'd do a cover of "Hangin' on the Telephone," but he doesn't, so he won't. Put down the guitar and go coach your soccer team, Russell. Your team has about as much a chance getting anywhere near the World Cup as your band has at getting a Grammy.

I gotta say, this is starting to get more and more difficult as I'm going along here. Please try to bear with me before I decide to go and grab a crowbar. I'm ready to head over the hill to go uproot some stars along the Hollywood Walk of Fame...

**Tony Danza:** Man, are you *really* gonna make me explain this one? As the lovely Yvonne Gomez would say, "Please don't!" She's right. I won't.

**Kevin Bacon:** Yeah, he's a pretty decent actor, and he even gets bonus points for having a small part in the über-classic comedy, *Animal House*. But that doesn't give him full reign to dork out folky-rock style with his brother (who should be nicknamed "Turkey Bacon," 'cause anything they've done together is a friggin' turkey). The six degrees of Kevin Bacon has me pointing to the trade-in counter at the used CD store, and

guess what? Even *they're* pointing me out the way I came in.

All right, I really should stop, or the star excavation over on The Hollywood Walk of Fame is gonna ensue. Feel free to drop a line and remind me of any other of your favorite floundering flops I haven't included here. And if you ever see some film star walking

down the street with a guitar case in hand, promise me you'll purse snatch that shit away from 'em. Enough's enough.

I'm Against It,  
—Designated Dale  
Designateddale@yahoo.com

TODD TAYLOR

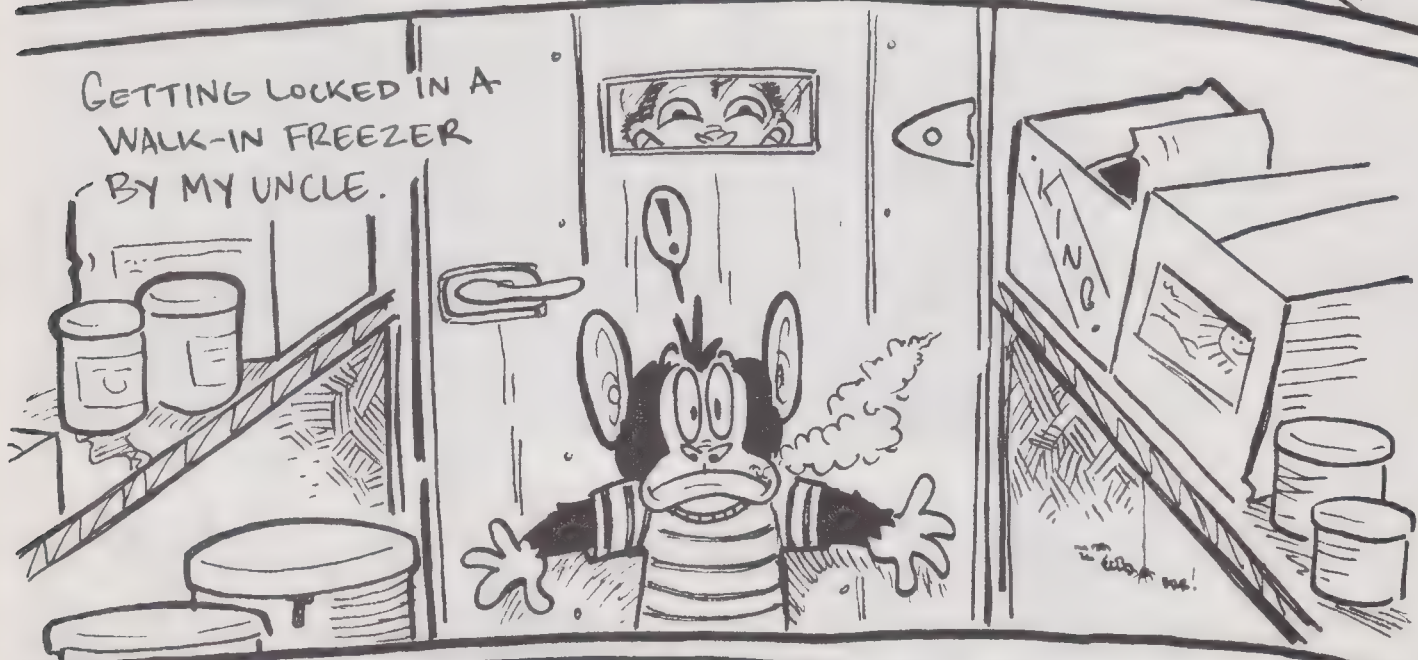


# CHICO SIMIO

## CHILDHOOD TRAUMAS!

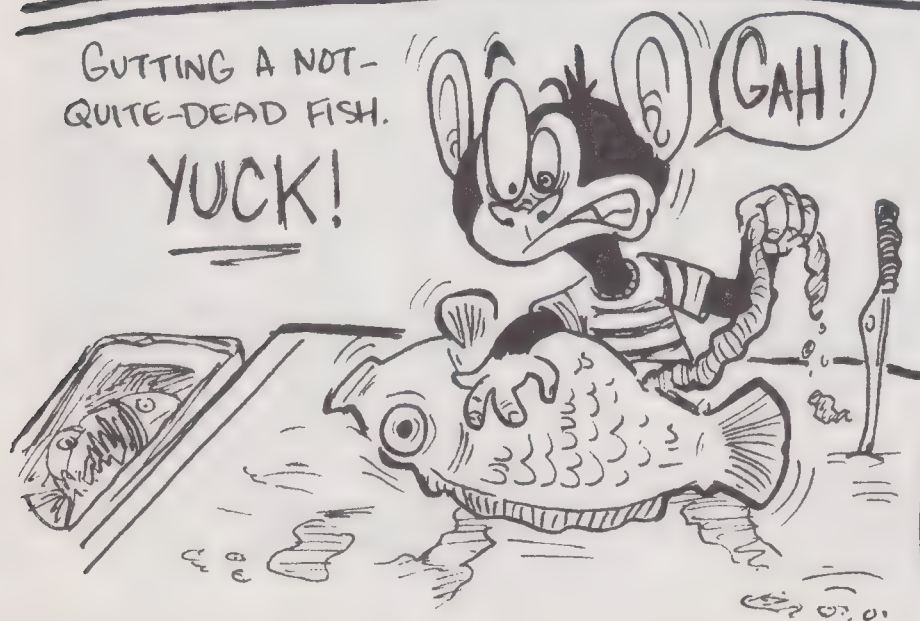


GETTING LOCKED IN A  
WALK-IN FREEZER  
BY MY UNCLE.



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BY KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA

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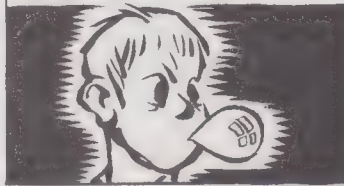


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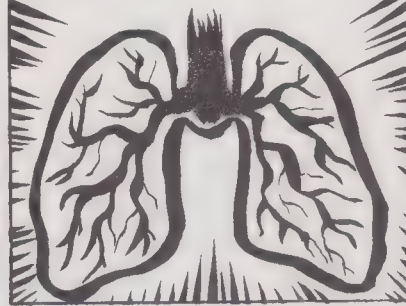


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# WHO ARE YOU?

**"Chrétien: Trombone isn't something you can be a soloist with."**

## Nardwuar *The Human Serviette* Vs. Jean Chrétien former Canadian Prime Minister 2007

**Nardwuar:** Who are you?

**Chrétien:** Jean Chrétien.

**Nardwuar:** Welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Jean Chrétien.

**Chrétien:** I've been here quite a lot of times in my life. I came here for the first time in July 1967. You were not born.

**Nardwuar:** How did you know that?

**Chrétien:** You're a kid.

**Nardwuar:** I am the kid.

**Chrétien:** Yes, you are the kid.

**Nardwuar:** Mr. Chrétien, Celine Dion, when she warms up for a performance, she listens to AC/DC and she also listens to hair metal. How do you prepare for a performance? How do you prepare for a presentation?

**Chrétien:** Well, I don't prepare myself because I do not have performance anymore. I am in retirement.

**Nardwuar:** How about a presentation? How do you get yourself psyched up to meet a crowd? Celine Dion listens to heavy metal music. How do you do it to get out there to meet a crowd?

**Chrétien:** I've never done anything special. I move from one environment to another one. I'm not a performer like her. She has to perform. I've seen her in Las Vegas and it's kind of a difficult performance. It's not intellectually difficult. She has to remember things, but, physically, she has to dance and jump and so on, so she has to prepare herself for that.

**Nardwuar:** But being a prime minister, you have to jump and dance and sing. It's quite physical too, isn't it?

**Chrétien:** I know, but you do that from your seat in the House of Commons, so you don't need to do any mental gymnastics to get ready.

**Nardwuar:** Well, how about when you're challenging Bill Clinton to jump over a fence, like in your brand new book (*My Years as Prime Minister*)?

**Chrétien:** I'm a very competitive guy. We were in Great Britain and we escaped our bodyguards for some forty-five minutes. That was quite a feat for us. We went into the bush and when we came back, there was a wall about six feet high. I said, "Bill, why don't we jump over that?" And I'm a competitive guy and I was up and he had problems to do it. He saw me here—he's fourteen years

younger than I—so I felt pretty good. That was a good day where the Canadian won.

**Nardwuar:** Mr. Chrétien, that's in your book, and also in your book is an amazing photo. What can you tell the people about this photo here? [Nardwuar shows photo] I just find this absolutely incredible. This is you, shirtless, in a pool with a whole bunch of journalists here in Rio De Janeiro.

**Chrétien:** We were in Rio De Janeiro and we were in the same hotel. I went down to swim and they were all there and we had a beer in a swimming pool. Looks like a pretty friendly crowd.

**Nardwuar:** What sort of adventures do you get involved with in politics? For instance, in 1971, were you involved in some vodka drinking contest with the Russians?

**Chrétien:** No it was... yes. It was not a contest. It was that they decided to get me drunk. And they do that because we were in Siberia and we were on the Lena River. The ambassador said to me, "Minister, today is the day that we get you drunk." They do that for a lot of guests. So he said, "Don't worry, we will take care of you. We drink a lot of vodka, toasting friendship with the north," and this is the year that we defeated them in hockey, so it was a lot of fun. And by the end of the afternoon, unfortunately, I had taken a bit too much of it.

But they said, "Let's have a contest between four Canadians and four Russians jumping into the river and swimming to another boat." And it was the Lena River, and the Lena River is like the Mackenzie River—it's not warm there. So we were four Canadians; we just got ready to jump. We took off our clothes. We were in our underwear, and they were too, and there were eight of us. They jumped the gun and we jumped into the river. The Russians found it really funny, but what happened was that when I jumped into the water, I drank a hell of a lot of water that diluted my vodka and the premier of the province of Yakutia was there and they had to carry him out of the boat while I walked on my own power off the boat to the acclamation of the Canadians, jokingly, because it was a contest. They do that. One time (Lester) "Mike" Pearson, when he was minister of foreign affairs, had a similar adventure in Moscow, and he's done very well, according to what I read about it.

**Nardwuar:** Mr. Chrétien, on page twelve of your brand new book, you talk about letting your grandsons eavesdrop on your first conversation with Bill Clinton. That was very nice of you.

**Chrétien:** Yes, why not? You know, Bill Clinton called me. I had won the election the night before. The final result came later. No, it was early, but concession by then Prime Minister Madame Campbell was after she waited for the results to come in from B.C. to concede. Anyway, Mr. Clinton called me early in the morning to congratulate me, and I said to the kids, "Why don't you listen? I'm talking to the president of the United States." And they were there.

**Nardwuar:** That was really cool that you let them eavesdrop. That was really cool, Mr. Chrétien.

**Chrétien:** Oh well, it wasn't anything that confidential.

**Nardwuar:** Still, it was only the president of the United States of America!

**Chrétien:** It was only the president of the United States and I was only the prime minister of Canada that day.

**Nardwuar:** And you are Mr. Jean Chrétien, the former prime minister of Canada. On page 195 of your book, you talk about using Diana Krall as "bait" to get the Mexican president up to Canada.

**Chrétien:** You find it cool?

**Nardwuar:** You got him up here!

**Chrétien:** Yes, what happened was that we had a conference, an international conference on federalism, and it was Mr. Dion who was in charge. They had this idea that we should have big speakers. He said, "Why don't we invite Bill Clinton and (Ernesto) Zedillo?" I said, "Hey, these guys don't go to conferences too often," but it turned out that it was organized in a way that Mr. Clinton came there, and came to Ottawa. It was not very far by helicopter to go there, and after that we had a golf game. How to get Zedillo? As the president of Mexico, if you want to get out of the country, you need the permission of parliament, so it's not easy. So I said, "Why don't you come?" and he said "I don't want to ask for permission because I ask for permission a lot to leave the country." It's a funny system that way. I don't know if they still have it. I said to him, "Well, that's



too bad because if you came, Diana Krall would have been there." And I knew. I had been at his residence once and had seen the music there, and I saw a lot of Diana Krall. So when I asked, I said, "too bad," and then he asked for the permission and he came and she (Krall) was in Canada at that time, and she came to Ottawa for a lunch. She had invited, for that occasion, her mom and dad from Nanaimo to be here. We had other guests and I put Zedillo and his wife next to the piano. Diana asked them what they wanted her to play and sing. So Diana Krall was the bait, and he came and he made a good speech.

**Nardwuar:** Mr. Chrétien, speaking of records and stuff, do you remember this record [Nardwuar pulls out an LP] *Go Go Trudeau* at all? You remember this by Les Sinners?

**Chrétien:** It was '68. I can see that right there, but it was his (Pierre Trudeau's) first election. I was already in his cabinet at that time. We were sworn in as his cabinet the year before, something like April 6, 1967. We became ministers the same day. Less than eight years after that, he was the leader and it was Trudeaumania, so the people...

**Nardwuar:** Made a record called *Go Go Trudeau*!

**Chrétien:** And they made a few others.

**Nardwuar:** Was there ever a Jean Chrétien record? Is there a Jean Chrétien record?

**Chrétien:** No.

**Nardwuar:** So there was no *Go Go Chrétien*?

**Chrétien:** No. The only funny thing I've done with music is they gave me a German trombone and I played a few times here and there. One time in public on TV, but it was almost a terrible disaster. At the convention

of the Liberal party they forced me to use it, but you know I'm not a performer, but I like music. Trombone isn't something you can be a soloist with.

**Nardwuar:** How about this particular Canadian band, this [Nardwuar pulls out another LP] French Canadian band, there are so many good French Canadian bands—Les Classels.

**Chrétien:** One of them (Rene Angelil) is the husband of Celine Dion, and that is something that nobody knows. These guys, what's his name?

**Nardwuar:** He might have actually been in a band called Les Baronets.

**Chrétien:** Les Baronets, that's right because Les Baronets' first performance was in my hometown. He told that to me. Les Classels were very popular back then.

**Nardwuar:** Mr. Chrétien, on page 185 of your book—talking about APEC—you say, "All at once, everybody began shouting about pepper." And I guess what I was wondering is, wasn't everybody *me*? I actually asked the pepper question, Mr. Chrétien.

**Chrétien:** You did?

**Nardwuar:** Yes, it wasn't, like, everyone yelling at you. It was like one person. I was actually asking you a question about punk rock and pepper spray, and that's what prompted your reply.

**Chrétien:** Perhaps. But my recollection is that I had many questions about it and I didn't know at all what had happened because that happened after I left, and so I said—what the hell—"Pepper, pepper I put it on my plate." And you remember that ... 'cause they talk about not pepper, they talk about mace.

**Nardwuar:** Yes, I said, "Does mace equal freedom?"

**Chrétien:** Yes, mace. But I did not know the meaning of it. So you shout to me, "pepper," and I say, "Oh, pepper, I put it on my plate," because I did not know what you meant. So I could not reply better. And I was in a good mood; the conference had gone well and there had been no problems.

**Nardwuar:** And earlier you had talked about your protesting years, how you protested yourself.

**Chrétien:** Of course, of course. When you're in public office you have to expect to have protests. I did organize protests myself when I was a kid. So, once in a while, when the protests were a bit lively, I would say to myself, "Jean, you deserve it. You remember what you did what you did when you were in Montreal or Quebec City when you were a kid." But, you know, it has to be within the guidelines and within the respect of not breaking property and letting the people the right to go where they want to go.

**Nardwuar:** What is interesting about that Mr. Chrétien, is that I thank you for acknowledging that, because in your book you say, "Once everybody began shouting..." You didn't say, "Once Nardwuar began shouting..."

**Chrétien:** Well, so much noise, eh, that I thought it was the whole room, I guess. You were very aggressive, if I remember; but for me, I had the impression that that question had come from many corners.

**Nardwuar:** No, it was right from me, Mr. Chrétien, and what's amazing is look at what happened! Did you see the stuff that happened from this? Somebody sent me this



**Nardwuar:** The Human Serviette vs. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien  
5th APEC Economic Leaders Meeting  
Closing Press Conference  
Tuesday, Nov. 25, 1997, 4:45 PM, Vancouver, BC

**Nardwuar:** Nardwuar CiTR Radio. Mr. Chrétien, regarding Suharto, there's a song out there right now by a punk band called The Nomads called "The Suharto Stomp." Earlier today, as well, at UBC, there were an incredible amount of protesters. Do you think, Mr. Chrétien, if you were, say, forty years younger, that you too would be writing punk songs and protesting against APEC?

**Chrétien:** But for me in a democracy, people protest. I, I have been protested a few times in my lifetime, and with a lot of people at times. That's democracy. I did that myself, too, when I was a student, and, uh, now I'm no more a student, but I accept the fact that people will protest and we had organized an area where they could express their views, and, uh, but at the same time we had to run the meeting properly.

**Nardwuar:** Do you think though that mace equals freedom? Some of the protesters were maced.

**Chrétien:** What did he say?

**Nardwuar:** Some of the protesters were maced. Does mace equal Freedom? Would you have been maced yourself back then, Prime Minister Chrétien?

**Chrétien:** But I don't know what you mean by that.

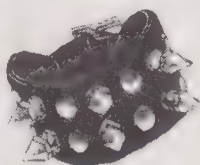
**Nardwuar:** Um, mace, pepper spray...

**Chrétien:** But I don't know. This technique did not exist in those days. For me, pepper, I put it on my plate. Next!



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entire T-shirt here. [Nardwuar holds up a shirt] "Pepper, I put it on my plate."

**Chrétien:** Yeah that's a nice—and you know I am smiling, to reflect the mood of the day.

**Nardwuar:** Is this capitalism at its best, Jean Chrétien?

**Chrétien:** It has nothing to do with capitalism. We were dealing with serious problems of the fiscal problems that were going on in the Asian countries at that time—the currency had collapsed, and Korea, and so on. It was a very serious meeting that we had here.

**Nardwuar:** It's just amazing that it turned into a T-shirt and, believe it or not Mr. Chrétien, it even makes an appearance, that quote that I asked you, even makes an appearance in [Nardwuar pulls out a book] *Canadian History for Dummies*.

**Chrétien:** Really, well, that's why you have it, because you're a dummy, I guess.

**Nardwuar:** Yes, I am. Thank you very much Mr. Chrétien. Winding up here, Mr. Chrétien, I was wondering, you were talking on page 380 of your book about the Pope. [Nardwuar pulls out a Pope picture disc record] I was wondering if you could tell me about the Pope and his influence on making you move up your retirement date.

**Chrétien:** We had a chat, a private talk, and I was talking about my plan of retirement, and I don't remember exactly, but he was a very nice person. I met him many times as prime minister, and my fate is I'm a Roman Catholic, so we discussed life, and retirement was part of it.

**Nardwuar:** I found it interesting that on page 284 of your book, Mr. Chrétien, you talk about Castro joking about Stockwell Day.

**Chrétien:** Yes, he said to me something like, "You should call an election." He was an amazing character. For example, one morning I was going out of Havana and I was in a car with Castro, and he said, "Are you aware, Mr. Chrétien, that the stock market collapsed in the morning?" There was a big drop in the market or something like that. But Castro talking to me about the stock market.

**Nardwuar:** He knew about the Dow Jones.

**Chrétien:** Yeah, it, was surprising.

**Nardwuar:** Lastly here, I wanted to talk to you about this. This is called the Hip Flip. [Nardwuar shows instructions to the Hip Flip] It is a little 1960s game. I did it with NDP leader Jack Layton. Prime Minister Stephen Harper would not do the Hip Flip with me. Prime Minister Paul Martin did the Hip Flip with me. Would you possibly partake in doing the Hip Flip with me, Jean Chrétien?

**Chrétien:** I don't do these things. Why should I do it? You want to add me to the record list?

**Nardwuar:** Oh, I was just wondering if you'd join the club, the Hip Flip club. It's just I've approached different political figures to do it.

**Chrétien:** Well, I don't know how to do it.

**Nardwuar:** Well, I can show you how to do it. We have it right over here. Would you like to see it all Mr. Chrétien?

**Chrétien:** I dunno.

**Nardwuar:** We have it right over here Mr. Chrétien [Nardwuar grabs the Hip Flip toy] And what it is...

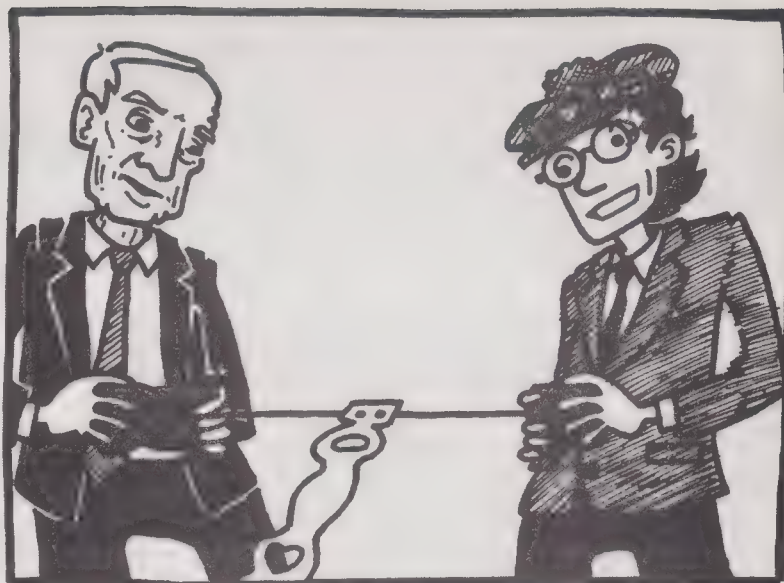
**Chrétien:** I understand.

[Nardwuar and Mr. Chrétien do the Hip Flip.]

**Nardwuar:** Thank you so much, Mr. Chrétien. Really appreciate your time, Mr. Chrétien. Keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

**Chrétien:** Doot doo!

To hear and see video of this interview, visit [www.nardwuar.com](http://www.nardwuar.com)



Nardwuar and Chrétien doing the Hip Flip.







## A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

**"Self-pity is the lazy indulgence of emo kids."**

# THE MEXICAN BREAK-UP

Mexico is nothing like I expected it to be. I had a collage in my head of Mexico, pasted together with images of Zapatistas in Chiapas; Jack Kerouac sweating out dysentery in a Mexico City hospital; Jessica Abel trying to fuse back her identity in *La Perdida*; various PBS documentaries about U.S. corporations blazing a trail of toxic waste and labor outrages across the Mexican desert; and soap operas on Univision that I can only understand about every third word of. So I guess that's what I expected to find: revolutionaries, artists, hipsters, corrupt businessmen, desperate poverty, and full-figured women with generous displays of cleavage. And, in a sense, I'm sure all of that is here; it's just not front and center.

So what is front and center? Wine country.

I didn't even know Mexico had wine country until Jim and Nuvia decided to get married down here. Now, I'm three days deep into it.

The wedding is over. I remember it. I remember the conversations I had and the last drink I ordered and the ride home and going to bed. Nothing too crazy. If, ten years ago, you told me that Jim Ruland was getting married and having an open whiskey bar, I would've counted on drinking way too much, sliding into blackout, waking up the next morning not sure how I got home, and wincing when I heard stories about how I made an ass out of myself and generally ruined the festivities. Now, I make a rule of not drinking whiskey like that and definitely not drinking whiskey when Jim Ruland is around. So here it is, the morning after his wedding, and I'm feeling fine. Healthy. I woke up early. I had a glass of Mexican tap water already and even that isn't bringing me down. It's time to get to the matter at hand.

I grab my book and a chair and head out to the balcony. It's a little chilly out here. I'm a couple thousand feet above sea level. The mist from the Pacific Ocean forms into a cloud, drifts east for several miles, and settles in this valley. The mountains are completely engulfed in fog. The grapevines below drip with dew. It's May in Mexico, I'm wearing jeans and a hoodie, and I'm still a little cold. I don't pay much attention to this, though, because I'm at the end of a long journey here.

My book is in my lap. Really, at this point, it's a manuscript. It's called *Train Wreck Girl*. I printed it out a few days ago. I punched three holes in each sheet of paper and stuck them

in a three-ring binder. On the drive down and during lulls between wedding parties, I've been reading back through it. I've made little notes, added small paragraphs here and there, and addressed issues that my editor asked me to address. I'm down to the last few pages and it occurs to me that this is it. When I type these changes into my computer, the novel is done. Done done. The changes I make this time are the last changes I'll make to this book. After this, it goes to the publisher, to the printer, and to bookstores. After this, it's fixed, set in type. It no longer belongs to me. It belongs to the reader. Is this a scary feeling? Yes. Is it a great feeling nonetheless?

Fucking-A.

Patricia Geary once told me that writing a novel is like getting involved in a long-term relationship with someone. Writing a short story is like having a one-night stand: it's fun and wild and you are emotionally invested, just not that much. Writing a novel, though, is agreeing to get serious with that person. You're going to start dating regularly. It'll be fun and exciting. Pretty soon, it'll start absorbing all your time and thoughts. It'll get intense. You'll wonder what it is, exactly, that you're doing. You'll wonder if it's worth it. You'll go through rough patches that you need to work on. You might even break up for a while. But there'll be something there that you just can't walk away from. You'll go back to it, again and again; it doesn't matter how many times and how much it consumes you. You'll make it work.

The difference is, when you get involved with a person long-term, there's a chance that you can make it last for the rest of your life. With a novel, sooner or later, you have to break up with it. So that's why I brought this novel down to Mexico with me: to tell her, "I think I gave you all I could, but we've gone as far as we can together. It's time for you start spending time in other people's imaginations."

More images flash through my mind. I first started flirting with her back in 1999. I was working as a construction superintendent, spending huge chunks of my day driving from job site to job site, dealing with the stress of work by losing myself in daydreams about barely formed characters. As those daydreams increased, I realized that those things were getting serious. Something needed to be done.

In February of 2000, I quit my job, started teaching part-time at the local

community college, did some freelance tractor work when it was looking like I wouldn't make rent, and spent five or six hours a day for about six months typing away. I wasn't sure where the novel would go, but I let it do its thing.

I was surfing a lot in those days, so the ocean seeped its way into the novel. I rode my bike most places around town, so the main character got a bicycle and started riding. I read a lot of crime novels—Raymond Chandler, Jim Thompson, Dashiell Hammett, Chester Himes—so a novel about sunny Cocoa Beach adopted some noir elements.

One night, I'd been writing until about two in the morning when I reached a point where I couldn't go on and I couldn't sleep. I decided to hop on my skateboard and ride around the neighborhood until I was tired enough to go to bed. I kicked around the vacant streets for a while, full moon shining down on the warm summer night. A rental sedan pulled up next to me. A middle-aged businessman rolled down his window. He was drunk. Clearly. He asked me if there were any hot spots to check out in Cocoa Beach.

"It's two-thirty in the morning," I told him. "Everything's closed."

"What about women?" he asked.

"What about them?"

"Do you know where I could find any?"

I realized that, in his booze-addled mind, he thought perhaps he'd run into a skateboarding pimp. I told him, "Yeah. What you want to do is go home, sober up, go to work tomorrow, and ask out the woman in the office who you've had a crush on for the last six months."

The guy told me to fuck off and drove away. I went back to riding around the vacant streets, wondering if a skateboarding pimp would make a cameo in the novel.

He didn't.

In late 2000, I finished writing the novel. I titled it *Crazy Broads and Dead People*. I proudly printed up all 350 pages of it, put it in a three ring binder, and read the complete draft for the first time. When I was finished, I was struck with the realization that this novel—for which I'd quit my job, on which I'd spent several months working like mad—completely sucked. I mean, it sucked bad. I almost deleted it. That might not have been a bad thing.

I spent the next few years trying to fix it. During that time, I did other things. I

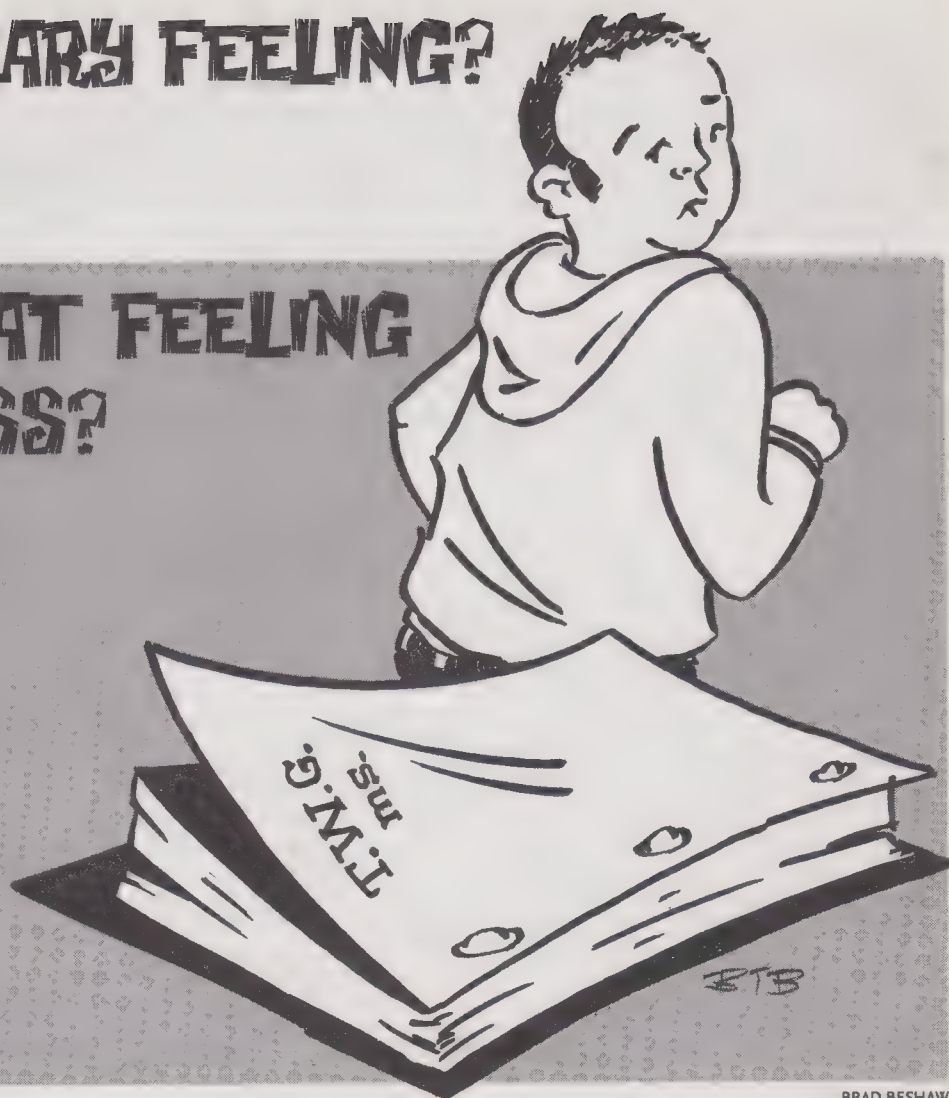


IS THIS A SCARY FEELING?

YES.

IS IT A GREAT FEELING  
NONETHELESS?

FUCKING-A.



BRAD BESHAW

had a bunch of one-night stands with short stories. I wrote enough of those to put out two short story collections. I also helped found this here magazine. And in the midst of it all, somewhere in late 2003, I made the executive decision that *Crazy Broads* and *Dead People* was bullshit and we were broken up for good.

During the summer of 2005, I went on two tours to support my short story collection *Barney's Crew*. A brutal heat wave hit the northeastern U.S. Joe Meno, Mickey Hess, and I did a reading in the loft of a Pittsburgh bookstore. It was about 105 degrees. No one bought a book from any of us. The next night, we read in New York City. It was so hot inside the art gallery that we decided to take the reading outside. I went first. It was New York City: loud, hot, smelly. An ambulance raced down the street, only to be blocked by a double-parked car. I stood on the sidewalk for three minutes, mid-story, waiting for the parking violator to move his car so that I could be heard over the blaring horn and sirens of the ambulance. In Boston, two people showed up to our reading. That's it. Just two. In Montreal, after another hot night of

readings, the drunken owner of the gallery where we did the reading told me that I needed a shtick. He told Mickey to try to incorporate more props into his reading. Mickey and I went across the street and got drunk.

The next morning, I lay in the back seat of a rented Toyota Echo, wallowing in the hangover brought on by those four readings and a tour that was turning into a bummer. I felt bad for bringing Mickey and Joe into this mess. I felt bad for the tens of thousands of miles I'd traveled and the hundreds of readings in dozens of cities. I felt bad about the wall of apathy and silence that greeted my new book. I felt bad for everything.

But self-pity is the lazy indulgence of emo kids. I needed to snap out of it. I listened to Mickey and Joe, who seemed undaunted. They talked about writing, their new projects, and what their favorite writers did that worked. As I eavesdropped, it occurred to me that the one person who could pull me out of this malaise was Danny McGregor, the hero (or anti-hero) of *Crazy Broads*. I went searching through the alleyways of my brain, hoping to find him.

He was there.

When I got home from that tour, I started working with Danny again. I wrote every morning for five or six hours, using the same basic plot and characters from *Crazy Broads*, but writing a whole new novel. I didn't even dig out my old copy of *Crazy Broads*. Why should I? It sucked.

Within a couple of months, I had the rough draft of a whole new novel. And this one, I liked.

Within a couple of years, I'd gone through a dozen revisions, sold the novel to Manic D Press, worked with the editor there to clean things up even more, scrapped chapters and added chapters, and read through everything one last time down here in Mexico.

And now, here I am. It's late May, 2007. I'm ready to say goodbye to the writing of *Train Wreck Girl*, ready to hand her over to my publisher, to printers, and to you. It's an *Annie Hall* kind of break up. I wish her the best. I'm better for the time we spent together. But, as the sun burns away the fog and the panorama of Mexican wine country opens into another day, I'm ready to move on.

—Sean Carswell





## SQUEEZE MY HORN

GARY HORNBERGER

**"The wig on the Jimmy Page guy looks a little puffy."**

# COVER Banned

In the cosmos we call music—it is important to ask—is a cover band really like flogging a dead horse? See, this all started for me when I went with my brother to see Heartbreaker, a Led Zeppelin cover band. I will admit here that, for a time in my youth, I was into the likes of Zeppelin, Rush, and so many others, so I agreed to go to this concert at the La Mirada playhouse. Musically, it was Zeppelin, but the stage show gave me this feeling of Spinal Tap. For some unknown reason, I just felt this overwhelming urge to giggle when the Robert Plant guy kept encouraging the audience to applaud. The only footage I remember of Zeppelin was at the midnight showing of *The Song Remains the Same*, and I'm pretty sure that the actual group didn't have to pan for applause.

The next strange thing was the age of the audience. There were teenagers and there were octogenarians seated throughout the theatre. There were guys in suits and there were guys with long hair and tie dyed shirts that looked like they rolled out of a VW van. The latter I expected to see more of, but what the hell. So, the show starts and the band plays some quality covers and they pretty much look the part, although the wig on the Jimmy Page guy looks a little puffy. I will admit that I gave some hand clapping for the Bonham drum solo, but at no time did I feel that I was watching the real deal.

Intermission comes, I go to use the head, take in some more of the crowd, and then head back to my seat. This is where it gets funny. To my right, at the start of the show, there were two guys who showed up late. I really couldn't make them out in the dark. It turns out that it's a dad and his teenage son, and they're chatting up the people behind them about the cover bands he's seen. Something about Pink Floyd being the best, and then he says, "Yeah, I've seen Heartbreaker at the swap meet. You can get in for a couple of bucks." At this point, I swing around and ask my brother how much the tickets cost, and he tells me about forty-five dollars. Come on! How can you play the Doll Hut one weekend and the Coliseum the next? Did I just get that "we've been taken" feeling? Here we are back at the Spinal Tap door.

The second half of the show is nothing more than dad explaining to his son all the little nuances of Zeppelin history. At the end of the show, the band tells the audience that they will be signing autographs out in the front. Once again, I start giggling and I tell my brother, "Oh yeah, were gonna get some of that," to which he says, "What the hell for?" the answer being, "How much cheesier can things get?" Somewhere in the midst of all that is my response of, "Those guys really think that they are Led Zeppelin. I have to see if they are going to sign real names or are they going to actually sign the names of the original members." They signed their own, but it still made me laugh.

At this point, after the show was over, I fought with the uneasy feeling of, "Are cover bands a good thing?" I started thinking, "Will the punk bands of the eighties soon spawn cover bands?" Could I drag myself to the swap meet to see The Dorkies cover The Dickies, or The Moans cover the Ramones? Please say it won't happen, but I have been assured it will. Thanks Dale. It is one thing when a band with one or two surviving members goes down to Guitar Center and picks a couple of young dudes to round out the band and make a little money under their original moniker. That I understand and can live with. But four or five guys trying to fake me out is just wrong in my book. I was fortunate enough to see Sinatra before the fade, so when I'm in Vegas, there is no inkling for me to see a Rat Pack cover show. If I want to hear him, I put on some vinyl. If I want to see him, there are plenty of old video documentaries out there.

This may be my own personal powder keg, but music is a large part of a person's history. At one point in my life, Kiss was big, then seventies rock, then punk, then the ceiling fell in and I was listening to just about anything. But if any of these were copied, it would sully those memories. There was an older gentleman I used to work with who had seen many bands long gone now, but he spoke of the experience almost romantically. How would those memories be if he went to a cover show? Would he be the guy saying he/she used to do this or sound like this? To me, it's the real thing that sticks in my memory banks

and gives me that warm, gooey feeling. So I must say "yes" to my original question. Cover bands are like flogging a dead horse. In fact, it's just like taking money from the departed.

### MANAGER #1

By Ben "Jack" Walter, Zine is free, but SASE or a dollar would help.

This zine makes me so fucking happy I just don't know how to express it. See, this guy is working what I think is the same crappy job that I just got out of. I just wish I knew what grocery store he works for. It is the same cry for help that I had. To read this little dude is heart breaking. It's all the little thoughts one has in their head at the end of the day that make it so hard to get to sleep and make it to the next day. Just when I thought I was alone and questioning my decision, I read this and tell myself I followed the right path. I would say this is just for those of us who slaved in the grocery, but it's not. It's for those who have slaved in any repetitive, heavy-lifting, boring job. It's not written in a whiney or vindictive way. It just is matter of fact. I need to tell you, Ben; you sent this little diamond to the right place. Thanks for the mental health. (Ben "Jack" Walter, 1702 Mount Pisgah Ln., Apt. #13, Silver Spring, MD 20903, jack45rpm@gmail.com)

### MY BRAIN HURTS #1

By Liz Baillie, \$6.00 U.S.

This is by far the weirdest comic of its type for me. See, I'm not real big on the gay friends' real life experience thing. Maybe it's because so many of them come along in the mail that they all could be by the same person. This book, however, is more like a soap opera of the down-and-out punk gay people, if that makes any sense. I found it difficult to put this one down, especially when the Joey character seems to finally catch a break then goes into a coma. Go ahead, tell me that doesn't sound like a soap opera. I must say, it is well written. One has to have some experience with the subculture to be able to present it so convincingly. This is a cool book, and I really am interested in what happens to these characters. (Microcosm Publishing, 222 S Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404, www.microcosmpublishing.com)





TRAVIS T.

# Could I drag myself to the Swap meet to see The Dorkies cover The Dickies, or The Moans cover the Ramones?

## DISTANCE MAKES THE HEART GROW SICK

By Cristy C. Road, \$15.00 U.S.

Okay, I forgot to tell you all that this is a book filled with postcards. Sorry! There is no story here, just some really cool graphic art on a whole bunch of postcards. Some of the art seems to be concert poster art, CD/DVD cover art and band art, which is visually stunning. As for a story line, there is nothing, so if you want to send some really cool postcards to friends, this is the book. Of course I wouldn't send them as get well cards. (Microcosm Publishing, Bloomington,

IN / Cristy C. Road, PO Box 60169 Brooklyn, NY 11206, [www.croadcore.org](http://www.croadcore.org))

## STREET PIZZA COMIX

By Andy P., \$4.00 U.S.

Now, I know that comic books are supposed to contain the unbelievable, but a pizza shop after the apocalypse? Where does this guy get his radioactive cheese since seventy-five percent of life on the planet has been wiped out? Here's the story in a nut shell: Dick Cheney has taken over things after dropping the bomb. He's taken to extortion and he's going after the pizza

man. There it is, no simpler than that. This comic walks that fine line of a good idea poorly presented. If this guy was in illegal arms to rebels and drawn better, I could give the thumbs up, but being a pizza guy doesn't even make it funny when reading the story line. Sorry, the pizza guy is too bad assed to laugh at. (Undercorecomix, [www.streetpizzacomix.com](http://www.streetpizzacomix.com))

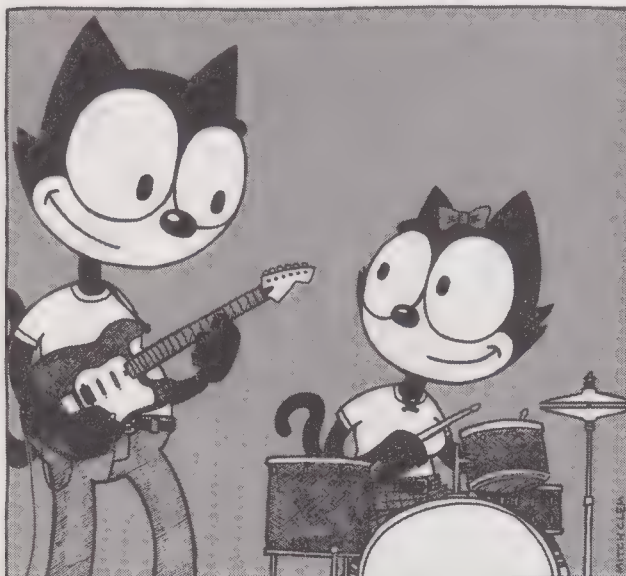




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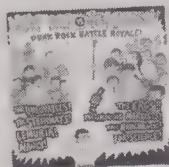


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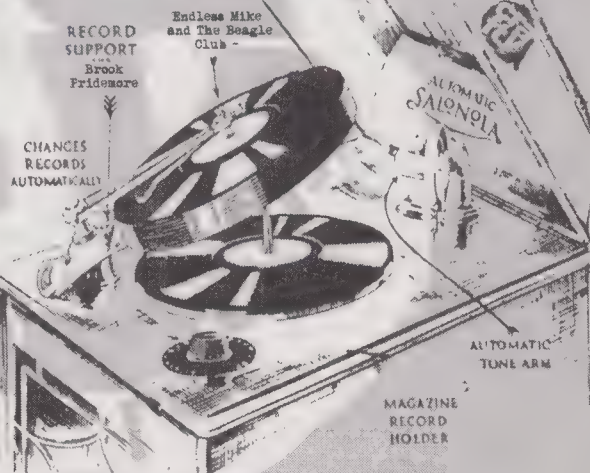
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**Dan Monick's Photo Page**

No Age at the L.A. River





# SO ILLEGALS

Part 2

JIMMY ALVARADO

We went in there being Chicanos, and that's the difference. If people didn't like us, we didn't give a fuck.



**L**ed by muralist Willie Herrón and including guitarist Tony Valdez, bassist Jesus "Xiuy" Velo, and drummer Bill Reyes, Los Illegals' mixture of politics, sonic adventurousness, arty sensibilities, uncompromising attitude, and punk energy has earned them equal parts reverence and contempt.

While their music has been dismissed by many as "too new wave" and their unabashed self-identification as a Chicano group has led to much misunderstanding of the band, their efforts over the course of their three-decade career have also resulted in a major label album, collaborations with numerous celebrated musicians and artists, numerous scholarly analyses of their work, and even the founding

of East Los Angeles' legendary punk club the Vex, which for a time in the 1980s, brought the Eastside and Westside underground music scenes together. Still active some twenty-nine years later, and not averse to the occasional gig, they have re-conceptualized The Vex idea as Vex AD, a music "academy" designed to mentor local musicians and help them to succeed in the greater music scene.

Part one of our discussion with Herrón and Velo covered the band's history, their unique take on Chicano identity, touring adventures in Mexico, and their opinions on punk rock. In part two, we continue our discussion, beginning with the cultural correlations and connections they've made with prior generations of Chicano musicians.

## Interviewed by Jimmy Alvarado / Layout by Daryl Gussin

**Jimmy:** One of the things that came up when I was talking to Mike from Circle One is that growing up, he didn't identify with the Mexican—or the Chicano—thing, and punk to him was kind of a way to rebel against that culture and to find a new culture that was his. I was wondering if you guys kind of viewed punk as a way of erasing the boundaries between the cultures so that you had one larger culture.

**Xiuy:** You know what was really interesting, and I don't know how this happened, but we wound up going back to the '40s and the beginning of Chicanismo, and relating to the pachucos (Chicano youth culture of that period that popularized the "zoot suit"). You know the Pachuco Boogie Boys? Ever heard "Pachuco Boogie" (a 1940s swing song with lyrics in caló, a slang popular with pachucos)?

**Jimmy:** Yeah. Don Tosti and his Pachuco Boogie Boys.

**Xiuy:** One of the greatest guys we had a weekend with. Willie and I, Palm Springs with Don Tosti. The dude's in his eighties and he's got this fantastic house and these stories about going from hardcore Texas to Roosevelt High School (in East L.A.) to playing with the Jimmy Dorsey Band at nineteen, and the whole story—being bicultural, then just saying, "Fuck it, I'm going to mix it up," and then doing that bilingual shit. It was so "Illegal" it wasn't funny, so Chicano "punk." Great guy. He passed away...

**Willie:** ... A couple of weeks after.

**Xiuy:** He didn't tell us he was dying of cancer. He had a book, and he said, "I know about you guys." And it's funny; you know how Chicano groups will put down other groups and stuff like that?

**Jimmy:** Yeah. It's another cultural thing, I always thought.

**Xiuy:** I figured the pachuco groups in the '40s did the same. Fuck no, man! He goes,

"What the fuck is it with all this pinche 'Tejano' (Texan) stuff?" Because it was so hokey, Tejano music. And then he goes, "And I got bummed out on a fuckin' article." So he pulls out this article where this Tejano comes to interview Don Tosti, and Don says, "Uh, well, that's not really where I wanna go. I'm more Chicano than Tejano." And the dude was saying he was a snotty person. Same shit we used to get. "You think you're too fuckin' good to play Tex-Mex like Los Lobos?" And it's funny; he tells us, "Lalo Guerrero has Los Lobos, I've got you guys." Wow, man, what a connection. Do you have the LP?

**Jimmy:** The only thing I have is "El Lay" on the *Raza Rock* compilation.

**Xiuy:** [Hands Jimmy a copy of the first Illegals album, *Internal Exile*] Don't give that shit away 'cause there aren't too many. We sold 25,000.

**Jimmy:** Well, for a punk band, that's huge.

**Xiuy:** And then we pressed another 25,000. There was a total of 60,000, in all, I understand. But in those days that's small.

**Jimmy:** Well, considering you're talking about Alpert and Moss (owners of A&M Records), yeah.

**Xiuy:** You'll find lots of little things. You've got to go back to that time, '79-'80. We sat on the fence while Harry Gamboa shot the photo. You know who Melanie Nissen is?

**Jimmy:** She was from *Slash* magazine, yeah.

**Xiuy:** I really loved her. She was cool. Willie and Melanie worked the cover together. You'll find songs on there that have certain things, and it's kind of... It's not "new wave." It's kind of like punk/new wave, but we didn't like the term "punk" in some ways, either. There are songs where you'll have to have an interpretation. "A-95" was the card for... the temporary visa card. "The Maze" was written because these guys, two years beforehand, committed suicide in The Maze prison in

Ireland fighting for their distinct personalities, like Chicanos were, within their own land. You remember Bobby Sands?

**Jimmy:** Yeah.

**Xiuy:** Well, that's what that's about. They'd just finished dying two years prior. They put them in prison, and they originally had them as prisoners of war.

**Jimmy:** The hunger strikes.

**Xiuy:** Right, and "The Maze" is from The Maze prison. I hate to say it's a concept album, like Supertramp or somebody pendejo ("stupid")....

**Willie:** But it is.

**Jimmy:** [Being a smart-ass] So you're saying it's the *Jesus Christ Superstar* of City Terrace?

**Willie:** With a skeleton face.

**Xiuy:** Hey, I'm actually wearing a Vex T-shirt there [points to the cover].

**Willie:** Yeah.

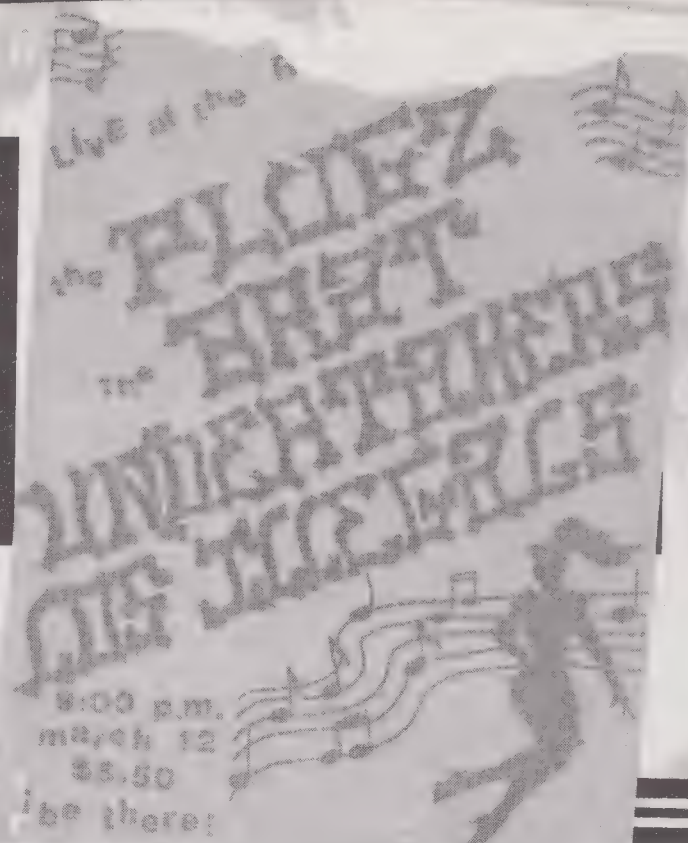
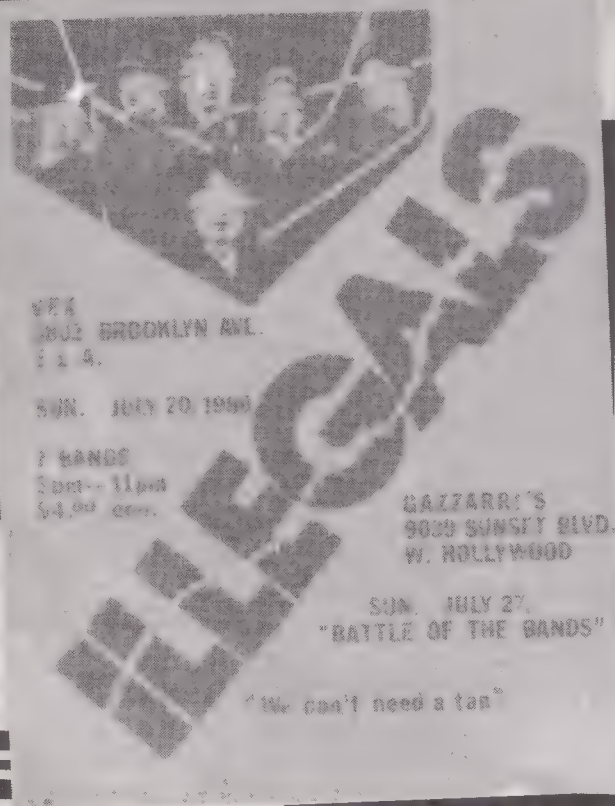
**Jimmy:** In what ways was Los Illegals an extension of the work with Asco?

**Xiuy:** I was a student of Asco. I found a *Regeneración* on the bus, and I looked for something that would work that way.

**Willie:** I think in many ways I thought of it like the soundtrack to Asco performances. That it was lacking audio—all the performances that we did—and I just felt that's what Los Illegals were doing—writing the soundtrack to performances, writing the soundtrack to works of art, to paintings that I just had titles for. There were paintings that were done, but there was no explanation to the painting. So, to me, that's what a lot of the songs were, since I primarily had the upper hand in most of the lyrics because I was singing them. So, to me, that was my image.

**Xiuy:** The original guys who were recruited for the band just didn't fit the concept. They recruited people they thought were admirable for qualities they liked, but then they weren't





like that at all. They didn't want to be a part of it. It was very interesting.

**Jimmy:** (Original singer) Eddie Ayala, right?

**Xiuy:** Right. He and the drummer, they were both in the start of the band. They wanted to start up their own band—nobody remembers this, I don't know why—Odd Squad. For a couple of years they did their band, they did their thing. It just wasn't successful. It wasn't their fault. That's who they were, that's what they were about.

**Jimmy:** Why did you guys choose illegal aliens as, I guess, the central theme of the band?

**Xiuy:** Everyone in East L.A. was trying to identify with the power structure. The whole concept of music in the '70s was to listen to the radio and act like them. Go against the grain.

**Willie:** I think, for us, that's what was "punk" about the band, too, is that we chose to be called, and to be—which I think at the time was a very difficult thing to do—was we chose something that was hitting home as opposed to something that seemed to be more European-influenced as far as the name of the band. We weren't talking with British accents and stuff like that, and we weren't writing about material that could be written by an English band. We were writing and relating to things that had to do with our experiences and maybe going back a generation, two generations and, in some cases, three generations. "El Lay" was basically written about my stepfather, who had come to the United States a few years before the song was written. In the '70s, he was washing dishes and he was deported three or four times and he kept coming back to wash dishes. So, to me

it seemed like, "Dude, this is a topic, this is so punk." We started off with "The" Illegals. We didn't have "Los" until we started to do some gigs and the "The" still seemed too English. Since "illegal" was already English, we just figured, "Well, now, let's screw the English language up by putting "Los," and even Rodney Bingenheimer couldn't pronounce it right. [laughs]

**Jimmy:** That guy can't pronounce anything right.

**Willie:** And that was cool for us that he couldn't even say it right.

**Xiuy:** Rodney played our four-track demo tape. God bless him.

**Willie:** He was one of the first ones to play us.

**Xiuy:** He had a lot of balls. He actually knew us and was playing us. He introduced us at one of the street scene shows, and before he got our name he couldn't remember who we were. "They've been here for a long time and, uh..."

**Willie:** "Los Alegrals."

**Xiuy:** It was great, but see, he had a lot of balls to play that.

**Jimmy:** Given the "DIY" aspect of Asco—you know, you guys didn't have any money, you kinda did everything yourself—why did you guys opt to go the major route with Los Illegals as a band, as opposed just doing it yourself?

**Xiuy:** The same reason that Zack de la Rocha (Rage Against The Machine) did it: the bigger you get your message out there, the better it is. You say you're going corporate, but you know, fuck it, you're going to get a million more people going corporate than you will being independent. If they didn't like us, fuck 'em. As long as we had the

politics and what we did in our past, you know, physically going to marches and all that shit, they can't stone us.

**Jimmy:** Do you think that being on the label (A&M) kind of stifled what you could have said?

**Xiuy:** No. You know what? They just got nervous 'cause we said "chingazos" once (although "chingazos" means "blows," as in being beaten, the root word, "chingar," is usually translated as "to fuck"). They said, "Could you say something else?" "Fregazos" (a less offensive way to say the same thing). That's it. But this was a way we could get to people in Ohio. This was a way we could get letters from someone in Phoenix, Arizona in the projects that said, "You know, I'd never heard anything like you guys before." If we'd gone indie, we wouldn't have done it because the indie scene wasn't big in those days. It was nothing. Remember, this was the time of Boston. The biggest hit was [whistles Lipps Inc.'s "Funkytown"]. That's what was big. So we had to do it, and when Zack did it, I defended his fuckin' ass big time. "Oh, you're selling out 'cause you went corporate." Fuck you. How many people got to hear and understand what he was talking about? It wasn't like selling your soul to the devil, either. It was the politics as usual. Yeah, they held up our second album....

**Willie:** But you know what's cool is that if there's another band that gets out there and is moderately successful and they say it better than we said it, and they say the same thing and they do everything better than we did it, then we did serve a purpose and we did take that first step and we did allow, I think, a lot





HARRY GAMBOA

of people to go forward, push themselves more and to say things the way we said it, and to sing both in English and Spanish in a rock'n'roll song.

**Jimmy:** So to you, the ends justify the means, then.

**Willie:** So to us, that justified it. Even though we were only moderately successful, to me we're still waiting for somebody to now go above what we did, but still maintain their politics, still maintain their identity and still maintain everything, because we could play right now all this music for you before we were even signed, before we even recorded, and you're going to hear little to no difference in the music, no changes in the lyrics, and everything is pretty much the way we wrote it, and we were allowed to do that. We didn't compromise anything.

**Xiuy:** That's why we didn't pick an American producer, too, 'cause they would try to change us. I mean, (Mick) Ronson sat with us. He fuckin' wanted to produce. The last thing he did before he passed away was *Your Arsenal* by Morrissey, 'cause he needed the money and he took the job. But he loved that underground shit to death. That motherfucker, he didn't give a shit. Chucked his career to just go play guitar with Bob Dylan and go on the road.

**Willie:** (Latin pop producer) Jose Quintana and (Mexican pop singer) Juan Gabriel both listened to our stuff and both of them wanted to produce us. And when we talked to them about our purpose, our identity, our reasoning for being musicians, what our music was about, they both looked at each other and

said, "Hey, we don't want to touch you guys 'cause you guys are for real."

**Xiuy:** "What, you don't want the money?" It's easy for us to say no to money.

**Willie:** Didn't Jose Quintana produce the wannabe Police?

**Xiuy:** Yeah, he wound up doing Maná and stuff like that. So, yeah, we went corporate, but we didn't go corporate all the way. Don't be afraid. What, five guys in your backyard are going to call you an asshole for signing, but you know what? There's a thousand kids in France who would love to hear you, so do you want to placate your five friends 'cause you're embarrassed or get your shit out there?

**Willie:** While we were on the road, this one producer said, "Just because you guys grew up with it doesn't mean that everyone else has heard it. So don't be afraid to do it the way you guys are doing it. And it's good that you're doing it, because not everybody grew up with that, with English and Spanish, with your Latin rhythms, with the timbales in a rock song. Not everybody has heard that."

**Xiuy:** Bringing it to today, all these kids that are being born now, the babies in the buggies, when they grow up, culturally, they're all going to be Chicanos. Maybe they're from Nicaragua and everywhere else, but that's gonna happen again. It's gonna become a community, especially if they seal off the border for a while. They're gonna be isolated so that the waves don't keep coming and reinforcing that culture. They're gonna separate and going to become Chicanos. I used to have a fight with a Nicaraguan lady

at the bank. She used to like me. She's all, "Mister Velo," in Spanish, "how are you gonna vote on the bilingual issue?" "Well, I support children being bilingual. You're speaking in Spanish, but you don't like my Spanish, do you?" She'd go, "Well, you kind of speak it weird." I said, "Well, you know, without bilingual education, your kids are gonna speak just like me." "Oh yeah, huh?" And I'm happy they defeated it, because, you know what? All these kids are gonna wind up having to speak Spanglish. It's okay with me. I'm happy 'cause language is the culture everyone is going to start picking up and, I swear to god, we're gonna start having this whole thing happening again, only this time it's going to be in the Midwest, in the South, the Northeast and everywhere else.

**Jimmy:** Here's a question: Obviously, there was also an issue of racism that was coming up with a lot of the stuff....

**Xiuy:** We were banned in Odessa, Texas. Guess where our President's from?

**Jimmy:** Here's the question though. The thing that I find interesting is that there are almost two different sets of Chicanos that come out of the Los Angeles punk scene, right? There's Los Illegals, the Odd Squad, and The Brat, and you guys seemed to have problems with the racism and finding some way to acculturate into the greater punk scene. But at the same time, there were Chicanos who were involved with the punk scene from its inception. There was the aforementioned Plugz, there was the Zeros, there was Alice Bag, Circle One, The Stains, and it seemed a little bit easier for them to find a niche in there. Why do you think it was so hard for you guys?



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Since "illegal" was already English, we just figured, "Well, now, let's screw the English language up by putting "Los," and even Rodney Bingenheimer couldn't pronounce it right.

**Xiuy:** Because we actually stood forth, and identified, and pulled our badges out and said, "Hey, we're Chicanos. Hey, we're here." The Plugz had two guys that were very white, very blue-eyed, and only the lead singer is Chicano looking. We're all Chicano, and we're announcing "We're here," whereas the other ones sounded very English. And Alice Bag—I love Alice. Alice is sweet, she's great, you know.

**Willie:** I think a lot of it is the way you were saying Mike was saying that he didn't identify with that part of it. See, we identified with it so much that we advocated it and that's what made us different. They didn't advocate it. They blended more, and we were like this black stone on the beach and they were like part of all the other sand piles.

**Xiuy:** They were like a room of bank presidents, and some of them are Chicanos. That's how they were. We went in there *being* Chicanos, and that's the difference. And if people didn't like us, we didn't give a fuck.

**Willie:** We made our ethnicity the platform for our music and the platform for our purpose to do the kind of music that we were doing, and we could've picked any genre of music. We were just from that era and we produced the music in the way we did, and we just consciously felt that we were blending different styles and not trying to sound like a style that preexisted.

**Jimmy:** The thing that I find that seems to be a continuing theme running through everything that [to Willie] you've been involved in and the band, and even to an extent with the Vex—and it kind of ties into what we're talking about right now—the continuing theme that I get is the alienation. There was a component of alienation in Asco, there was a component of alienation from the larger culture, from the punk culture, and the Chicano culture, and I see it also with Los Illegals.

**Xiuy:** Tell me about the alienation. Explain it to me.

**Jimmy:** Well, okay; a sense of belonging, but not really belonging.

**Willie:** Right.

**Jimmy:** Like with Asco—you were Chicanos, you were part of the Chicano art thing, you were expressing what you thought were Chicano thoughts, but you didn't fit in with the Chicanismo that was going on...

**Willie:** The majority.

**Jimmy:** ... You didn't fit in with the prevailing Caucasian, mainstream art scene. In the case of Los Illegals, you had this group that was very Chicano, that was saying Chicano-oriented things, singing in Spanglish, but you were treated like bastard stepchildren by Mexico and the U.S., number one. Number two, you were completely alienated from the Chicano rock scene because you didn't play Santana...

**Willie:** Right.

**Jimmy:** ... And you were completely alienated from the punks.

**Xiuy:** We were the Black Panthers, to use a bad analogy. The NAACP was making gains. They were getting voting going. They had the Voting Rights Act. They had the freedom bus rides. Four years later, after, Schwermer, Cheney, and Goodwin died, they had a huge micro-blowup within their movement, and the NAACP and certain people didn't like it. But you couldn't deny that they were definitely for themselves as a Black thing. The first breakfast programs ever in the entire world—and now it's common—were done by that movement. So to use a bad analogy, we were like the Black Panthers of the Chicano movement, right? Loved and hated by those who were rebellious, that even considered themselves rebellious. See, we're waiting for somebody like that to come along and tell us we're a bunch of old farts, too. I thought *Razorcake* was it. [Jimmy laughs]

**Jimmy:** The point I was trying to make is that it's interesting that this kind of ended up where you were at because—speaking of the conceptual art thing—it's funny to me because both Los Illegals and Asco kind of embody the "ni de aqui, ni de alla" ("neither from here nor there") reality of the Chicano diaspora, you know?

**Xiuy:** We used to tell everybody we were "Nisos" when we would go to Mexico.

"Nisos? What's that?" "Ni somos Mexicanos, ni somos Americanos ("We're not Mexicans, we're not Americans")."

**Willie:** Well, see, I just have that '60s consciousness that came from the rioting, seeing on television while the sun was going down behind downtown L.A., and seeing the Watts riots on TV, and then the Chicano Moratorium. Those kinds of things, for me, really told me that being Chicano is something that... it doesn't exist and somebody has to make it exist. Somebody has to form it. Somebody has to create it. And it came from all those things that the Blacks had that were theirs. And everybody seemed to have something that was theirs, even the Mexicanos and the MEChAs that seemed to relate more to the pre-Columbian, but the *Chicano* Chicanos who were in the middle had fuckin' nothing that was Chicano. So to me, that's what Asco tried to do, that's what the Illegals tried to do: create some foundation for the real Chicanismo, the Mexican American who identifies with the politics of their very own existence, what their grandparents went through, what their parents went through, what they're going through, and what the future Chicanos will be having to inherit and what they're gonna have to go through. It didn't exist. There was no platform. [laughs]

**Xiuy:** And I had to go through shit with this vato that I kept quiet about. You know how you take these deprogrammers, and you take them out of these fuckin' religions? I had to be... I loved the idea of Asco. I finally got to meet Willie and work with him and stuff like that, and I braved it one night in '71 to meet him here, walking into City Terrace. Vatos locos ("crazy guys," in this instance meaning gangsters) telling me, "We're gonna kick your ass if we see you walking," you know? I'm scared like shit to go outside. I had to be deprogrammed from all that shit.

Let me give you an example. Just to get a mural up was a big deal for me to see. "Oh, something Latino. It's about us, even if it's in our neighborhood. Hey, Willie, ain't that the most beautiful thing?" "That's a piece of shit!



Fuck that mural! Those fuckin' Aztecs! They were the most oppressive motherfuckers! If they weren't slicing people's hearts out and wearing their fuckin' skin... Why do you think a million fuckin' Indians rose up and joined these fuckin' gachupines (derisive term for "Spaniard") to murder them? Because they were worse than the fuckin' Nazis! Are you out of your mind? Fuck that! You think Stalin was bad? Cuauhtémoc was the only good guy, but the rest of them were worse than Stalin!" I was like, "Fuck, okay..." I had to be deprogrammed. And when I see people trying, like, Tazomatli, Huitzilopochtli, you know, fuck that! These guys are blinded. So we had to deprogram ourselves in order to be ourselves. Willie deprogrammed me. [Willie laughs] And my wife was a Mexicana and she has her sisters, and they come, and I had to shut my mouth at any dinners we had. We didn't talk about politics. And they don't like Chicanos. They're from Huntington Park, where if you win a soccer game you start turning cars over.

**Jimmy:** Yeah.

**Xiuy:** That's little Mexico over there. Don't fuck with that place, man. They're so bad that they don't even have MEChA there. MEChA's too gabacho ("Caucasian") for them. It's craziness, man. I feel bad for the kids today. We need to fire up the kids to get off their asses. That's why we have Vex AD. We had a Vex reunion (in 2001). Did you go to that?

**Jimmy:** No. I heard my brother was the drummer for the Stains that night, though.

**Xiuy:** They were great. They were fuckin' awesome. Did you read in Josh Kuhn's article ("Vex Populi," published in *Los Angeles Magazine* not long after the show) how great they were?

**Jimmy:** Yeah, something about leaving a trail of blood or something?

**Xiuy:** Yeah, they left blood on the stage and they tore the lights down. It was Willie that went and got them to play. He refused to move unless he found the fuckin' Stains. And we didn't give a shit about the Stains, 'cause they used to just come and get all pedo ("drunk"), although they said that they would trash our gigs. Why are you gonna trash a gig? It's already trashed. Willie refused to budge. I'm like, "Willie, we can't find them." He was like, "No, we're gonna get the Stains. We need the Stains."

**Willie:** Well, the reason for me that they were important was 'cause they played on the night that the beach punks demolished Self-Help Graphics and that was the end. They played that night. But Black Flag's the one, it was their group that jacked everything up, but the Stains were on the bill that day in November and they played.

**Xiuy:** He told (Black Flag bassist Chuck Dukowski) off.

**Willie:** Yeah, I was telling him, "How dare you not take responsibility for your audience, how your audience reacts."

**Jimmy:** You talking about at the reunion show?

**Willie:** No. There was another conference at Self-Help Graphics.

**Jimmy:** Oh, yeah, something called "Unfinished Business."

**Xiuy:** Oh, man, this guy went and took care of Black Flag. [laughs] On the spot.

**Willie:** In front of everybody, man. I just pretty much hit him up as to why he felt that a band didn't have a responsibility to protect and to take charge of an audience when an audience begins to get violent during their performance. And he just said the wrong thing. At least to me he said the wrong thing. And I pretty much just said, "Well, all of your big bands, man, no matter how many thousands and thousands of dollars they make, they take control of the venue when things get out of hand and they protect the innocent who can possibly get stomped on. Somebody could get killed, or whatever, and you mean to tell me that that you didn't care about that? You didn't care that, while you were doing your set, they were throwing tables out the windows? That somebody's outside getting hit on the head with a full-blown fifty-pound table? That didn't come to your mind?" And he said, "No, it didn't. I was just jamming. I just thought that's the way people got off on our music." I just told him that that was just irresponsible and none of my artist friends would've said that. I got a lot of mixed reactions from that, for hitting him so hard. And I just said, "It was your band and your crowd that night that went into the offices, broke all the equipment, ripped all the paintings, and destroyed Self-Help Graphics. You guys came from a different part of the city to fuck up our venue, to fuck up our place, to screw us up. Didn't that ever occur to you while you were playing your song, or whatever, that all of these were possibilities?" And, of course, he couldn't defend it.

**Xiuy:** We made it safe for those guys. People used to get their shit killed on Brooklyn and Soto (the corner where the original location of the Vex resided, and where Self-Help Graphics still resides). You remember that.

**Jimmy:** What were some of the bands that played The Vex?

**Xiuy:** My favorite band was Thee Undertakers.

**Jimmy:** Yeah, they've been playing again.

**Xiuy:** We would ask them to do a gig, and they would do it with us, and I would run and do whatever, shower and get over there and do the lights for them 'cause I knew their songs. They were great.

**Jimmy:** What other bands from the area are there that you think didn't get their proper credit or due?

**Xiuy:** Did you like Violent Children?

**Willie:** Well, it was rumored that their lead singer would go up and then all of a sudden the Stains were the Violent Children. I'm not sure how much of a real band the Violent Children were, because it was still just jamming with the dude screaming.

**Xiuy:** But did you like them? Which band did you like?

**Jimmy:** Yeah, was there any band that you actually think didn't get the credit they were due?

**Willie:** Nah, I really can't say that during that time there was any one group that stood out. The only other band that seemed to be of

interest to a lot of people that went through the Vex was the Stains, besides the groups that they mention all the time.

**Jimmy:** So the Stains would be one.

**Xiuy:** More than the Bags, more than the Plugz. The Stains.

**Willie:** And I liked the Warriors (a multiracial band that was frequently on bills at the earliest incarnation of the Vex), too.

**Xiuy:** Oh, yeah.

**Willie:** I have to actually say I liked the Warriors, and not just because they were Black—primarily, because they were...

**Xiuy:** They were mixed. They had women.

**Willie:** It's because they were the most sophisticated of all of us.

**Xiuy:** They brought in the college crowd. They were real interesting. I remember doing some dates in Hollywood, and I was so glad they fuckin' played, because they had a whole elegance, so when industry people came up, they didn't just see a bunch of Chicano punks throwing up beer and shit. It was, "Oh, this is cool." It was something they could relate to. The Warriors are the unsung heroes. The Warriors, and I would say, Thee Undertakers. But you're right about the Warriors. They brought in a soul-punk element, a little more than just the same old 1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4 thrash.

**Willie:** Right.

**Xiuy:** Very cool. And groups like the Busboys would be out there watching them, too.

**Jimmy:** How did you manage to get so many diverse bands to play the Vex?

**Xiuy:** From the music point of view. We had friends that were artists through Willie, and art and music will always go hand-in-hand. These bands need to hook up with some artists, support the artists, go to the shows, and meet the people that are in the bands at those shows, because art is the one thing Chicanos will crisscross the river with, believe it or not. It's a small thing. Through the artists we were able to get these people. That's how we did it.

**Jimmy:** So there wasn't like a specific person, like Willie was the funnel...

**Xiuy:** We had these girls who were beautiful, good looking, and they would take a demo tape of us and take it to the clubs out there and try to get us booked there. It never worked. It was easier for us to get the bands out here. It was weird how that worked out, and it was through the art thing. The Fender Buddies were a band he knew—they were from New York, but were living out here—and who did you know from Fender Buddies? Some girl in there, right?

**Willie:** Yeah, the only girl that was in there.

**Xiuy:** And believe it or not, if you just picked up a phone and you called Wall Of Voodoo, they would say, "Yeah, yeah. We'll come check it out," and they would show up and check out the show. We just found out who they were, before they were on a major label, and just weren't afraid to call them up.

**Jimmy:** How were you able to get the word out in such a way that people were coming from all over the county?

**Willie:** I think it's just the first couple of shows we had. They were successful and they were



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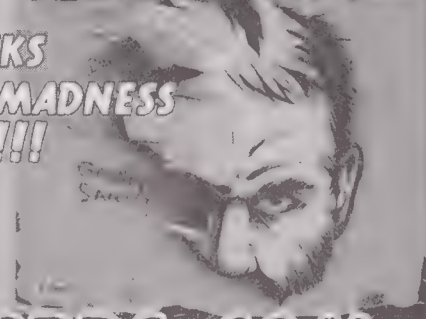
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DAVID GUILBERT

mainly the local groups. Then the word spread that we were looking for groups, and we were trying to put together a zine out of the Vex, so we were calling for entries. Every time we would have a concert, we would advertise the zine and make sure that everybody who was interested in having their poems published, their photography, whatever creative element they were working with and producing that they wanted included in the magazine, could submit it. If they were bands that just wanted their bio and their phone numbers, they could go ahead and submit that. So with that, and also letting everybody know that we were looking for groups to play and for people to write, we would have this little book that they would sign in when they came in as a guest and, if there was any band they recommended and phone numbers, we would contact groups like that, too. A lot of it was word of mouth.

**Xiuy:** We would also flyer the gigs, too. We essentially went to the backyard parties....

**Willie:** Yeah, flyers. It would say "The Vex," and we would list the bands that were playing and then we would go to other gigs and we would flyer.

**Xiuy:** It was so new it was kind of communal. We got thrown out for looking alternative in gabacho parties, and not for being Chicano. Very interesting how that worked out. But going out and doing it.

**Jimmy:** I know the Vex closed at Self-Help Graphics because of the Black Flag show, but what led to your disassociation with the club?

**Xiuy:** We couldn't run it anymore. We were traveling, touring, doing larger dates and the pressure was on. "I've got Midnight Oil coming in. Can you sell me 250 tickets at twenty-five bucks a pop? Can you sell 600 tickets? If you can sell 600, I'll put you on instead of The Red Hot Chili Peppers." That kind of pressure. How are we gonna run a club and try to do this and you've got to market the band?

**Jimmy:** So it was just a matter of you having to disassociate from the Vex because it was physically impossible to be in two places at once?

**Willie:** Yeah.

**Xiuy:** And because we left a partner of ours who we worked with in control. Very, very business oriented.

**Jimmy:** Joe Suquette.

**Willie:** Yeah. We pretty much said, "Okay, we've got these dates and we've got these recording sessions and A&M Records is looking at us," and this was shortly after the October 1980 issue of the Calendar section in the *LA Times* announcing the Vex. Then we were asked to go into the studio and start working at A&M, so we pretty much just let Joe know that we were gonna be pulling out of the project and stuff, and for him to follow through. So he was able to carry it for a couple of months and pretty much the downfall was that he just didn't do the right kind of booking. He was gearing more to just getting it filled, getting people to pay....

**Xiuy:** And buy beer.

**Willie:** ... and buy beer, 'cause he was originally involved in the all the Vex gigs because he would bring in the beer. He was a beer distributor, but the main part of his perspective was that he was a promoter. He was with Hot Rod Productions, so his whole idea was to promote a gig, make money, and just get bands. He didn't have the Illegals' mission that we particularly put together, where we wanted to take out of town bands and mix them with East L.A. bands so we'd get the crowds intermingling and groups crisscrossing and just experiencing different trips, you know?

**Xiuy:** It's nothing personal, but it happens in a larger scale where business commodifies a revolution. We had a revolution. We had a business partner and he just commodified the revolution and sold it to make money. It's like when you have the song "Revolution" playing and they're selling Nike shoes, you know? He just took it over and made a business out of it. And when it loses that heart, nothing's going to work. So he commodified our revolution, but we don't hate him for it or anything.

**Jimmy:** I know you guys were involved with the Self-Help Graphics location, but you weren't involved with the Paramount Ballroom location.

**Xiuy:** What we did—because it was running as Vex—is we would occasionally show up and play.

**Jimmy:** I was gonna ask that. Did you guys actually go to any of the later Vexes?

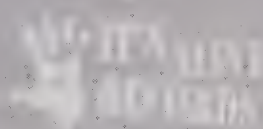
**Willie:** We did the Copacabana and we did....



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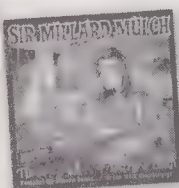


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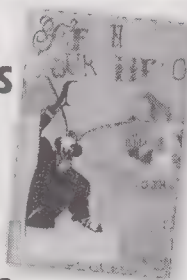
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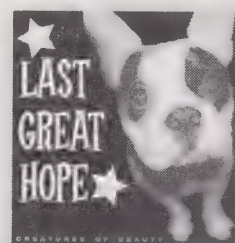
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**PRINTING AND REPLICATION FOR INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS AND BANDS SINCE 1994**



**Xiuy:** The Paramount Ballroom with Levi and the Rockats. They were huge.

**Willie:** We didn't do the Vern (Auditorium location).

**Xiuy:** So Joe knew we were coming and he wouldn't put the hardcore bands on there. It's funny how they all say they played the Vex. Like Brett Gurewitz. That wasn't during when we were running it.

**Willie:** No, that wasn't when it was at Self-Help Graphics.

**Xiuy:** When the Minutemen did it, we weren't running it, either. That was the Joe Suquette thing by then. We did like the Minutemen, and we played with them at ...

**Willie:** Joe was more like the Smog Marines.

**Xiuy:** Who was the crazy chick who died? She used to blow up cars and had a mohawk. What was her name?

**Willie:** Wendy O. Williams.

**Xiuy:** He had her over there. Great, now it's like, "In my day..." [laughs] *Flipside* would never write about us. They considered us pop. They would write about Los Lobos, but they would never write about us.

**Willie:** Yeah, but Los Lobos weren't pop.

**Xiuy:** Fuck *Flipside*! [Jimmy laughs] We don't need 'em. What were they gonna do for us? Give us a bunch of guys to come and vomit at our gigs and not really pay attention to what it was about?

**Jimmy:** Okay, um, current stuff. Have you guys reformed again?

**Xiuy:** We never broke up.

**Jimmy:** Oh, okay.

**Xiuy:** We took breaks. We took it easy. We do a gig if it's worth it. It has to be a high profile gig that's gonna benefit some person or some organization. There's no sense in going to play for like \$400-500 to do a quick thirty-minute gig. That's like prostituting yourself. What's it gonna do? You know, we went to college and stuff like that. I'm okay, Willie's a world famous artist. We earn our money that way.

**Jimmy:** You don't need the \$400-500.

**Xiuy:** The Japanese American Museum was the last thing we did. (An all-day event in 2002 celebrating the musical and multicultural legacy of the East Los Angeles barrio of Boyle Heights. Shortly after this interview, they played a short set at Tia Chucha's Cafe Cultural with The Brat and Odd Squad's Angela Vogel as part of a show highlighting East Los Angeles' '80s underground music scene.)

**Jimmy:** That was a good show.

**Willie:** Was it that one?

**Xiuy:** Art galleries, and then we've been doing theatres.

**Willie:** Oh no, yeah, it was at the Tropical de Nopal. Then we did the Getty Museum right after that.

**Xiuy:** We were doing a thing with (writer) Ruben Martinez. Los Illegals, Pacho from Maldita Vecindad, and Ruben Martinez performed a little thing we do, some theatre pieces.

**Willie:** Yeah, that was about six years ago.

**Xiuy:** So we do theatre pieces like that, we did PBS in Japan, we'll do some things like the festival in San Diego. If they're high

profile and they have a meaning, we'll do that. If we don't have to play for the next three or four months, okay. For us at this particular level, we'd have to get up, work out, go to an agency, put out a disc—which is a ton of pressure. Do you want that kind of pressure?—and then tour your asses off in order to sell a lot, which is difficult these days 'cause of all the downloads.

**Willie:** We're better off with daytime jobs. We pitch in, we make copies of our music, and then we just give it away. That's less mental stress.

**Xiuy:** And it's not like we're not getting anything in feedback. There's always dudes who are camping out at our door and stuff like that.

**Jimmy:** More specifically, or more formally, what is Vex AD?

**Xiuy:** It's artist development. It's the escuela ("little school") that we're creating. It's the next stage of Vex.

**Jimmy:** Tell me about the school and how it pertains to what you've been doing the last thirty some-odd years?

**Willie:** Well, it's kind of like... next week I'm actually going to speak to between fourteen and twenty-one-year-olds whose parents are alcoholics, whose parents are druggies, who some of those kids are druggies. They're having trouble in school. They're at-risk for a bunch of reasons. I go and I take slides, and I talk about art, I talk about music, I talk about what makes me who I am and how I've done what I've done. I see this academy, this school, in a similar way, but instead of going to the students and taking my images and talking to them about my stuff to try to influence them in a positive way, we're going out talent-seeking and inviting talent into our academy to help them to get to the next level with what they're doing. Right now we're basically concentrating on music because there is an abundance of musicians out there and, since the studio's located in City Terrace, we're starting around here. Every other day I'll hear a band over here, another band over here, on Saturdays there's one over by Bonnie Beach (Street). Right now, there are probably five or six bands and they all rehearse within a seven or eight-block radius from this place. I just felt that it would be a very important thing since there's no money for those kinds of things in this community, and that's how I could give back everything that I've gotten from this community.

**Jimmy:** Why go that route as opposed to, say, opening up another club and giving them a place to play? Is it just a matter of it's easier for you to do it this way than having to book your own club?

**Willie:** Well, because I feel that while there are a lot of groups that have places to play—like how I started, playing in backyards, playing for car clubs, playing in places that there's not going to be anybody there that's going to listen to them—there's still this notion that in order to be considered successful, you have to have some sort of a record contract, or some sort of backing. Somebody has to really help support you to tour all over the world, to play your music all

over, not just to play car clubs and not just to play backyard parties. So the whole purpose is to create an academy that works more with a chosen few and works more one-on-one as opposed to just opening up a performance place and letting seven or eight bands play every other week and from there they're just gonna go back and play at a backyard party. We're trying to do more than that to get them to the next level.

**Xiuy:** Do we play for 500 bucks, or do we do something that will leave us a legacy? It's easier to say it than put your money where your mouth is.

**Jimmy:** Would you consider yourself a punk?

**Xiuy:** No. We hated that word. We never considered ourselves punk.

**Willie:** No. I go to the Plaza Market (a local market) and the people say, "Well, he doesn't look like a cholo," so I tell them that I'm a rocker-cholo. I don't use the term "punk."

**Xiuy:** But we had to use it because that's what they pigeonholed us into.

**Willie:** Right.

**Xiuy:** We came up during the time when that was happening. I loved the Pistols. I loved their idea, I loved their rebelliousness, I applied it to Aztlán, but I never related. It was British. But whether we liked it or not, they identified us with it. It's like your wife: she's a Mexican even if she's not. A thousand years go by, their whole history is different, their whole language, their food, their whole culture. But she's a Mexican.

**Willie:** Yeah, I'll never forget what Gronk said. He goes, "You guys are 'chunk.' You're not punk. You're chunk rockers."

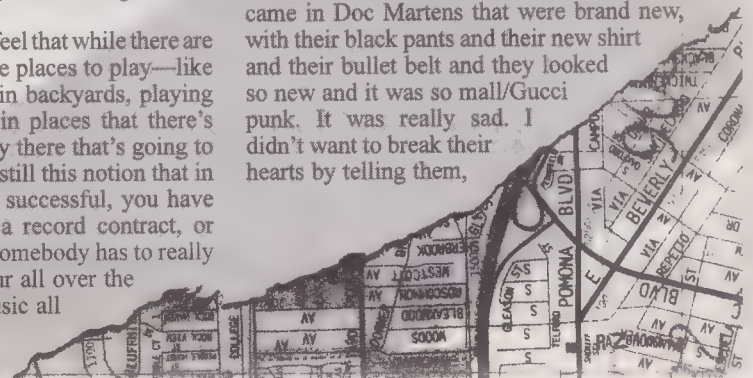
**Xiuy:** If you ask the Sex Pistols if they considered themselves punk, they say no. It's just a media tag. You've got to accept it whether you like it or not.

**Jimmy:** Do you think it applied? That it was essentially not a bad pigeonhole to be in?

**Xiuy:** They needed something to hang this alternative, new thing and they didn't know what to call it. Gotta call it something, and that's what they picked. Sometimes we just get... fuck it. "Yeah, we're punk." Get it over with. Is that not what you want to hear? But that's the truth.

**Jimmy:** There's nothing wrong with not identifying with the term "punk." Again, it's, uh.... The mentality was always the most "punk" people were the ones who said they weren't punk, because if you label yourself, you negate yourself.

**Xiuy:** I went to a party last weekend and these kids knew that myself and some other musicians were going to be there. They wanted to come—and they meant well—they came in Doc Martens that were brand new, with their black pants and their new shirt and their bullet belt and they looked so new and it was so mall/Gucci punk. It was really sad. I didn't want to break their hearts by telling them,



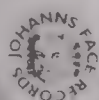


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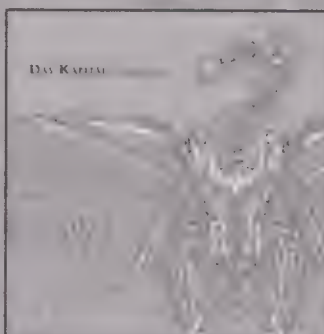


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"What the fuck are you wearing, stupid? Make up your own shit!"

**Jimmy:** We call them "parrot punks," 'cause with the bright green and red mohawks, they look like fuckin' birds.

**Xiuy:** 'Cause they don't get beat up anymore for that, so they don't realize what it is. Now if people would get off their asses and beat these people up like they're supposed to [Willie and Jimmy laugh], then they would know what the fuck to do!

**Willie:** No, then they wouldn't dress like that! [laughs] They'll be trying to take off the belt while they're getting their ass kicked!

**Xiuy:** Then you would see who was real.

**Jimmy:** You'd separate the men from the boys, yeah.

**Xiuy:** It was nightmare walking the streets.

**Jimmy:** Yeah, it was.

**Willie:** I had a friend with lightning bolt platform shoes who got booked with me at the county jail. Let me tell you, he took those fuckin' boots off and his fuckin' leopard calzones ("underwear") so fuckin' fast. He just like stripped down before they even told him to. He didn't want one dude in the cell to check out the way he was fuckin' wearing them, otherwise they would've just bent him over right there. So you know all those punks. That's what they're gonna do.

**Jimmy:** It was fucking hell, sometimes, to grow up a punk in City Terrace. My brother had his head busted open on the sidewalk when he was twelve years old, right here on the corner of McGilvrey and City Terrace Drive, basically because he had a mohawk.

**Xiuy:** Ow. Rough stuff.

**Jimmy:** Yeah, but in comparison to now, it was pretty bad to do it here, and it was pretty bad to do it in the United States as a general rule back then. I mean like, again, you wore black drainpipes then and people were screaming "Devo" at you and throwing shit at you. Now, when somebody asks me what it was like, I say, "Take your mom's nicest dress, put it on, put on some fuckin' seven-inch fuck-me pumps and go to the mall."

**Xiuy:** That's exactly what it's like. You are absolutely wearing a badge to show what you're about in a lot of places. I didn't dress the English punk. I mean, we cut out pieces of mariachi suits. We just did our alternative Chicano way to do it.

**Willie:** Yeah, I think we were more inspired by the Californio style of dressing.

**Xiuy:** Big time. You know what our drumhead has?

**Jimmy:** What?

**Xiuy:** Or one of our drumheads. It's...

**Willie:** Joaquin Murrieta. (An infamous 1800s California freedom fighter, or bandit, depending on which side of the fence you sit.)

**Xiuy:** Joaquin Murrieta. "Fuckin' take that, Mexicans," you know? "Fuckin' take that, gabachos." That is us. It's planting the friggin' flag and saying, "What are you gonna do?"

**Jimmy:** Something I always want to do when we go to the Placita (Olvera Street), whenever they have the mariachis or whatever like that, is I see all those tourists eating in La Golondrina (a famous, expensive restaurant there) and I always wanna tell the guy, "Here's ten bucks.

Play 'El Corrido de Joaquin Murrieta,'" just to raise a little ruckus.

**Willie:** Right. Well, to us, like the "screaming woman," Joaquin Murrieta to us, the kind of Chicanos that we were trying to show that we were, was way more powerful. I identified more with the "screaming woman" and Joaquin Murrieta than Emiliano Zapata, even than Che Guevara, even more than Frida Kahlo, even more than La Virgen de Guadalupe, even more than Pancho Villa.

**Xiuy:** What about your T-shirt? The rock en Español T-shirt. Tell him what's on it. [laughs]

**Willie:** It's a portrait of Joaquin Murrieta and it says—what does it say?—it says "Rock en Español sure as fuck ain't Chicano." And then it says "Aztlán 2000."

**Jimmy:** That's fuckin' great.

**Xiuy:** And when you wear that shit amongst the MEChistas (MEChA members), they're like...

**Willie:** Oh, man, they look at you like...

**Xiuy:** ... "Wait, wait, wait a minute..." It's a whole new world for them.

**Willie:** Well, when we did that punk photo shoot up at that Barnsdall Park, when Gary Leonard got all those punks together? Shoot, we didn't waste time. We went over there and when we got there, like, ten minutes late and he came up to us and I was wearing that shirt and shit, and he goes, "Ah, I already took the photo." I said, "Fuck, 'cause you knew Chicanos were gonna be here late, so you took it before we got here so we wouldn't be in the fuckin' pictures." [laughs]

**Xiuy:** Alice Bag and Tito Larriba, Westside Chicanos got together with Eastside Chicanos and we took the shot.

**Willie:** And we took a shot together, a separate photo of just us. Yeah, it won't come out. You won't see it, believe me. [laughs]

**Jimmy:** Yeah, that kind of thing, you know, when I was growing up, everybody was talking about Cesar Chavez—and no disrespect to the guy, a very important man—but I was always more inspired by Reies Lopez Tijerina (a '60s Chicano activist who utilized any means available to him, including armed insurrection, in his attempts to get the United States to honor the land grant provisions of the treaty it signed with Mexico in 1848), who was just like...

**Xiuy:** Oh, Tijerina, yeah, well, he went out and did it.

**Jimmy:** Yeah. I mean, it's like with Malcolm X, you know? Malcolm X talked a good talk, and I've got a lot of respect for Malcolm X, but he didn't go and fuckin' raid a courthouse, or take over a national park and declare it a sovereign nation, or go to Washington to make a citizen's arrest on Chief Justice Warren Berger. I mean, Tijerina was fuckin' crazy!

**Xiuy:** Yeah, he was more of an anarchist. "Kill the head and the rest will follow" kinda stuff. Any more questions?

**Jimmy:** Yeah. Why do you think that you guys and the Brat and the Odd Squad are the only three bands from East L.A. that anybody ever really talks about?

**Willie:** I think it's because they go back to the Vex article in the Calendar section and

everybody's too fuckin' lazy to go out like you're doing and, fuckin', really look for us and talk to us because they would fuckin' learn that that's not all, that's not the only perspective, those aren't the only groups.

**Xiuy:** It's not because we're exceptional. It's not because we're super. It's not because we've got this god-given thing from outer space. C'mon, it's because the fuckin' article came out.

**Willie:** Yeah. And after that, everybody just goes there. They get their info from there; okay they're done.

**Xiuy:** There are kids playing around backyard parties that are better than us, could do the same shit. They just don't know it.

**Willie:** 'Cause they do that with Asco, too.

**Xiuy:** Any other band would sit here and say, "Well, you know we hate to take credit for it, but we're the greatest thing since sliced bread." Fuck that. It's a bunch of bullshit.

**Jimmy:** That's interesting. That kind of flies in the face of the impression I had of you guys. You know, like you said, a lot of the jealousy that came out of Asco was that you guys were hogging all the attention and so on and so forth, and what you're saying is completely contrary to that.

**Xiuy:** It's funny how people like you have an opinion about us as a music group before, and people had an opinion of Asco. But when you finally get to realize who they are...

**Jimmy:** The biggest revelation is that you guys were in just the same shitty position in the grand scheme of things as we were in the backyards.

**Xiuy:** You remember Tomata Du Plenty, the guy that was in the Screamers? They never put anything out. I hear they were fuckin' great. I met them. I drank with them, but I never heard them play.


**Willie:** But you know what? The thing that's amazing to me—and I don't know if it sets people apart, if it puts people on different levels, "Well, that person's serious. Oh no, well, they were poseurs. Oh, they just jumped on the bandwagon. Oh, they were a shot in the dark, or a spit in the ocean"—is when I fuckin' see the Rolling Stones selling out trillions of venues and they're fuckin' sixty-something years old. To me, that's the difference, is when we're sixty and we're still fuckin' doing it the way we did it when we were thirteen, we're for real. "We were just together for one year and we've never made a record but we're a fuckin' great band." Well, what the fuck does that mean in the scope of an entire lifetime? It doesn't mean shit. That little fuckin' piece of shit means fuckin' nothing. But, if you do it for fifty fuckin' years over and over, and you're still nobody, you're still nothing, but you did it for fifty years and you were consistent, you fuckin' deserve a fuckin' award. [Everybody laughs.] That's the difference to me between what we're talking about.

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# BEAR PROOF SUIT



Ryan—guitar and vocals

Magoo—bass and vocals

Mark—drums

Hanson—guitar and vocals

Interview by Kevin DeBroux

All photos by Andy Junk

Layout by Dave Disorder



**WISCONSIN.** America's State. The four members of Bear Proof Suit were born and bred in the manure-laden soil of this place. Forced to grow up quickly, they dreamed of escaping a life of drudgery and toil in the dairy mines that have provided fortune to a few and pain to so many. So they made their way, guitars in hand, to Milwaukee, a futuristic 20th Century wonderland (where vowels outnumber consonants and anything can be had for a price (usually \$5.99 a 12 pack)). Old friend and fellow Wisconsin native Kevin DeBroux of Pink Reason sat down with The Suit to share tales of their travels and travails, city living and spare change-giving, vices and crises, what makes them tick and how long the world has got until they explode.

**Kevin:** So it's 2008. Why are you guys playing hardcore? [laughter]

**Hanson:** Because acceptance is cyclical... we crave acceptance.

**Ryan:** That's right. Clearly, the 21st century return of short/fast/loud crap has just passed us right by. I don't know, sometimes you gotta play a fast one, but sometimes we gotta play a *slow* one.

**Kevin:** What's your response to zines like *Z-Gun* who say, "This music is good, but it'd be better if it came out in 1983"?

**Ryan:** Well, that's just Scott Soriano (*Z-Gun* zine & S-S Records honcho) justifying his appreciation of what he heard to himself. What's funny is that—while I don't know the guy or anything—he talks about Tales Of Terror being his favorite hardcore band, which is a Sacramento band he grew up with, and I checked them out and we sound a lot like them. Thick and gnarly with leads....

**Kevin:** A lot of guitar solos?

**Ryan:** Yeah, yeah, and I actually heard one of their songs which I totally plan on ripping off at some point and I made a note to myself: "That riff rules and only one dude in America today is gonna remotely know where I got it." [laughter] Do you ever take notes on riffs that you want to go back and "borrow"?

**Kevin:** Not riffs so much, but I'll hear a sound or an aesthetic and be like, "Man, I gotta do that one."

**Ryan:** I listen to the most music when I'm driving, since I drive for a living, and I often think, "man, I gotta have a mini-tape recorder with me or a notebook or something where if I hear something I can just go, 'OOH!' and hold it up to the speaker and say, 'Reference today, Tuesday, 6:05 PM, mile marker 257, discovered this riff: JUH NUH NUH-NUH-NUH NUH-NUH.'" Awesome!

**Hanson:** You should have said 18:05.

**Ryan:** Yeah, you're right, I was just testing ya.

**Magoo:** I thought you were in the military?!

**Ryan:** I was...

**Hanson:** Now look at ya!

**Ryan:** Now look at me... well back to the hardcore question: for people who expect to hear the short/fast revival shit, our songs are gonna be way too long for 'em. We actually sat down and said, "Let's try to write a song that's under a minute," and it's fifty-eight seconds long. I feel like hey, I'm thirty five years old, so why wouldn't I write songs that incorporate everything I've loved from

the last twenty years of being into music? We're sitting in a room with several thousand records, so I'm not gonna pick two or three of them and base a fucking band around that. Hey, in unrelated news, I got an awesome letter in the mail two weeks ago from the I.R.S., and how often does that sentence ever get said? [laughter] The I.R.S. seems to think that I, or a member of my immediate family, have recently served in a combat zone and is due some cash.

**Magoo:** Combat pay!

**Ryan:** Combat pay!

**Magoo:** Well, you live here now... [laughter] (Ryan just bought a house on the "wrong side of the tracks.")

**Kevin:** What's it like living in what *Time* Magazine called "The Most Dangerous City In America" in 2006?

**Kevin:** They were talking to the police chief about it, and the chief's whole response was that 9/11 led to a lot of federal funding being

diverted into Homeland Security and they tracked back and showed the decline...

**Ryan:** I heard that, and also that a lot of city cops are National Guardsmen.

**Kevin:** That's true, too. They've lost a lot of officers.

**Ryan:** We're just hurting for men on the street.

**Magoo:** They can't afford to put enough cops on the beat. It's just a manpower situation in neighborhoods like this...

**Hanson:** Manpower (temp agency) is hiring cops now? [laughter]

**Magoo:** It's like a thinly veiled demilitarized zone where you just need to put some bodies on the street, but they don't have the money for it.

**Ryan:** Milwaukee's a bad property crimes city for stuff like car break-ins and burglaries.

**Hanson:** The City Tax.

**Ryan:** The City Tax, that's right. That's what it gets referred to locally when your shit gets





fucked with. "Oh, you paid The City Tax." I—knock on cardboard—have never paid The City Tax, well, actually I have had my vehicles broken into, but I've been fortunate enough to never get a gun stuck in my face or anything. (One week after this interview took place, the band's van was stolen from behind Ryan's house.) (Note: Cardboard is not a suitable substitute for wood when it comes to averting bad luck.)

Well, we grew up in small towns or suburban areas, and growing up I knew that fucked up shit happened in Milwaukee. I never thought any different, but when I joined the Navy and was living in Philadelphia, I realized that there were places that were infinitely more fucked up and scary than any street in Milwaukee. Have any of you guys been to inner-city Detroit?

**Magoo:** It's a wasteland.

**Ryan:** It's like half of it burned down during the '67 riots and they never repaired it. Downtown Detroit at night is a ghost town.

**Magoo:** When I was in Detroit with Holy Shit!, we walked by this crazy burned-out minivan that had been set on fire and the guy was like, "Yeah, it's been there for two weeks." I was out on the front porch at the house we were staying at, wasted, and this old black couple comes walking by and she's got a baseball bat and I was drunk so I yelled "You guys going to play some baseball?" "NO." [laughter]

**Kevin:** Milwaukee isn't known for having a violent scene, but what would it take for you guys to beat the shit out of somebody?

**Hanson:** Catch them stealing my bike.

**Magoo:** Having somebody hit me in the head with a guitar.

**Kevin:** No, that's enough to get your friends shot! (Some local scum crashed a house show at Magoo's old house in the 'hood, stole shit, fought people, then after getting kicked out, came back and shot somebody. Good times.)

**Magoo:** Well, it did make me drunkenly hit a guy a bunch and kick him in the nuts, but he wouldn't go down. He was like a fuckin' eunuch. He was beating on Eric (Schultz, Holy Shit! drummer) and I was kicking him in the nuts over and over.

**Hanson:** He was probably wearing a cup.

**Kevin:** If you're planning on robbing houses, that's probably a good thing to think of.

**Ryan:** "We're going to a stranger's house to cause trouble. You got your cup on?"

**Magoo:** Also he was wearing a giant fuckin' ghetto fur.

**Ryan:** I know! He was wearing a giant purple jacket with a fur collar and nobody can find him?

**Magoo:** It's like a giant space suit—I don't know where you are in there! Basically, if you live in the ghetto, don't ever own anything that you want. [laughter] If you like video games, just don't bother. If you like video games, shoot at cars as they go by and score points based on that.

**Ryan:** Go to the bowling alley and bowl and pretend that you have a Wii. "Oh man, I'm saving up to get a Wii, but in the meantime I've gotta actually bowl." [laughter] This sucks!"

**Kevin:** Where have you guys played that you most want to go back to? [long pause]

**Ryan:** Mobile, Alabama was fuckin' awesome when we toured through the South with Holy Shit! Not only was the venue great—it was a pizza place that did shows (Picklefish)—but the two best bands we played with on that tour were from Mobile. We saw Artimus Prime and Roman Gabriel Todd's Beast Rising Up Out Of The Sea, who are like the best bass/drums two piece I've ever seen. Yeah, I definitely look forward to going back to Mobile.

**Magoo:** I don't even remember Mobile because I got shocked so bad that I couldn't even think anymore....

**Ryan:** Three-quarters of us enjoyed Mobile.

Magoo got it electrically removed from his memory.

**Kevin:** How'd you get electrocuted?

**Magoo:** Not electrocuted. Electrocuted means getting put to death by the state in the electric chair. I'd like to clear that up once and for all! [laughter] Electrocute is a combination of the words "electric" and "execute." But the mics were running on a different polarity or something....

**Ryan:** Wasn't that the infamous bad power strip?

**Magoo:** Yeah, it was *our* bad power strip! We brought it!

**Ryan:** Note to self: bring functioning power strip on tour.

**Magoo:** Note to self: throw away horrible piece-of-shit power strip, which I think we did.

**Ryan:** Huntsville's also great.

**Kevin:** So Magoo, Brock (the guy who got shot) said to ask you when the mustache is coming back.

**Magoo:** It's coming. I'm just biding my time. I think for baseball season.

**Hanson:** I can really say this with confidence: Bear Proof Suit is the one band that consistently plays baseball when there's baseball to be played.

**Ryan:** When we played baseball in Tulsa, was that Mark (BPS drummer) who took a line drive right off the head?

**Hanson:** Yeah, he pitched it to me and I gave it right back to him.

**Magoo:** Then we went down to Austin, middle of January, and beat a team of locals. It was a great moment in Milwaukee history. And Ryan hit a home run!

**Ryan:** I hit a ball over the fucking fence at the park, and not only was it a chain link fence, but they had a net up to the tops of the light poles because it was the street right there and in the pavilion at the park they were having a big Mexican wedding, so it was all mondo fuckin' pickup trucks on the street. I hit the ball the farthest I've ever hit it in my life and

## I enjoy being a loser. This is what I wanna do.



it went over the net and right towards all those \$40,000 pickups. In my mind I was thinking, "How quickly can I sprint to the van and take off when I smash a windshield and a bunch of Mexicans in tuxedos start chasing my ass down the street?" [laughter] I could just see like thirty punk rockers in the field all running away screaming....

**Magoo:** And suddenly salsa music starts to play... [laughter]

**Hanson:** "We didn't chase you until you put on this getaway music." [laughter]

**Ryan:** But, luckily, the ball didn't hit any of those trucks and we lived to triumph the day.

**Hanson:** We lived to vomit the next morning after eating Tamale House.

**Kevin:** Do you guys feel there's something to be said for playing smaller towns as opposed to bigger cities?

**Magoo:** Everybody talks about the big cities, but we're trying to give some love to the smaller cities.



Get a life doing what you wanna do,  
and then just find a job that allows you to  
live that life.

**Hanson:** I think it just matters what venue you play at, not the size of the city itself.

**Ryan:** It's all about who the local people are who put on shows and attend shows.

**Hanson:** You'd ideally like to play a show with people you'd want to hang out with.

**Ryan:** Exactly. At this point, Wisconsin bands in our scene have been touring the whole country for, like, ten years, especially Modern Machines and Holy Shit!, who've been just about everywhere. But scenes are cyclical, too—sometimes the guy who got shit done leaves town and the whole thing dries up. We'll play anywhere for anyone, but I remember telling Magoo the last time we played Chicago, "I don't think we'll ever appeal to crowds of people, only individuals who get where we're coming from."

**Hanson:** Quality versus quantity.

**Ryan:** My whole thing is that I'm at the point where I don't want to hear ten identical songs by a band. If I see a local band doing that, I'll think, "They're good, but I'll check them out in six months to see if they've written another song." I would much rather see a band take a chance and mix it up even if it doesn't all come off great.

**Kevin:** You mentioned scenes being cyclical. It seemed like Green Bay in the '90s always had a new crop of kids coming up to form bands, but does Milwaukee have anything like that going on right now?

**Hanson:** There are definitely people who are younger than us, but there's just not as many as there were around the Green Bay scene ten years ago. I think we were an anomaly where everyone who used to go to the Concert Café (long-running, now-defunct all ages venue in Green Bay) moved to Milwaukee.

**Ryan:** The difference is there are the peripheral people who come to shows occasionally and are there for the party aspect. For people in their teens and early twenties, it's something to do, like, "Oh there are some bands playing tonight; I'll go hang out." And then there's the doers—the ones who are always gonna be in bands and wanna be in bands and wanna tour, and to them this is all a very realistic thing, making music. That's the difference. All these people who moved here are doers and have been in bands since they were seventeen, so they all packed up their shit and moved to Milwaukee because it seemed like the best spot to keep on doing.

**Kevin:** Do you think that because of that Milwaukee has developed any kind of original sound?

**Hanson:** Well, every band sounds different.

**Ryan:** That's the greatest thing about it. It's funny when I see what other places around the country talk about when they think of Milwaukee. To one scene, Milwaukee was all

about the Catholic Boys, and now to one scene it's all about Holy Shit!, and to another it's all about Goodnight Loving, and to another it's all about Chinese Telephones.

**Kevin:** A lot of regional scenes have a label to document them. Is there anything like that in Milwaukee?

**Hanson:** For records, there's Repulsion who's putting out our LP and 7" and Dusty Medical (run by Kevin Mistreter) who has put out a bunch of stuff already.

**Ryan:** But he only wants to put out his kind of rock'n'roll stuff.

**Hanson:** Well, if you're a label guy, you ought to be able to put out what you want!

**Ryan:** Yeah, you're right. "Hey, everyone in a band! Why don't I just put out everyone's records because it's fuckin' communism and everyone gets a release!" But as far as labels go, I think bands around here are not afraid to kick down their own money and put out their own records.

**Kevin:** Are there benefits to releasing your own records rather than trying to find labels to do it for you?

**Ryan:** I think honestly that there's a benefit to hook up with a label that's like-minded, like when we lucked out with Criminal IQ.

**Hanson:** So you don't have to spend your whole paycheck putting out a record.

**Ryan:** Yeah, hooking up with them was the most perfect thing possible because they'd been around for a while and had put out a diverse bunch of stuff—hardcore thrash, weird shit, rock'n'roll. To me, Criminal IQ is the perfect type of label, and I'm eternally grateful to Darius (CIQ boss hoss).

**Kevin:** So what's the orange whale?

**Magoo:** Adderall.

**Ryan:** "Ride the Orange Whale"—now was that Tabman (Holy Shit! singer) who coined that?

**Hanson:** Somebody.

**Ryan:** Somebody definitely said that.

**Magoo:** Everybody in this town loooves Adderall.

**Hanson:** Four different amphetamines in one pill.

**Magoo:** Here's how you ride the orange whale. You buddy up with your friend who's got a little ADD problem—or ADHD or whatever they're calling it these days—and you either ingest or crush and snort his wonderful orange medicine.

**Kevin:** Do you think that Adderall has an effect on the music being made around here?

**Hanson:** It makes people stay up longer.

**Magoo:** To a point.

**Hanson:** If you lock yourself in a room on Adderall, and you've got a guitar and you're writing songs, who knows what the fuck you're gonna come up with. (Mark calls Ryan's phone. He's on tour as keyboardist in Louis Tully.)

**Ryan:** Mark wants everyone to know how talented he is and what an essential part of the band he is. He hopes we're not making fun of him.

**Kevin:** You guys have a member who's on tour with another band right now. How does that work with so much inbreeding between bands in Milwaukee?

**Ryan:** It's usually a seniority issue with most senior band getting dibs on show nights.

**Magoo:** I don't really find that to be the case. I think whoever books a show first gets it.


**Kevin:** Does that ever cause problems with touring?





# SHOT BAKER

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**IN STORES JUNE 24**

"Straight ahead punk rock from this Chicago four piece: great melodies, tight chops, and thoughtful songwriting. This band takes bits of what other bands from their city blazed a dark trail with but add their own identity into it. Let's put it this way kids—would Naked Raygun take this band out on tour unless they brought it? I think not." —Sean Koepenick, RAZORCANE

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**Ryan:** Not really. It was really insane when Hanson was still in the Modern Machines because they literally went out of town almost every fuckin' weekend and they would have shit booked months and months in advance, so when we first started out it was much harder, but Hanson cut the cord a year ago. Now it's not really an issue.

**Kevin:** You guys are all gaining in age. Ryan, you're obviously the oldest. What's it like playing music that's associated with youth?

**Ryan:** We started this band when I was thirty-two. I was into punk rock for half my life until I had a chance to be in a band that was really doing exactly the type of shit I wanted to do, so I'm completely grateful.

**Hanson:** So it's like you're eighteen now.

**Ryan:** That's totally right, only I have the benefit of a lifetime of broken dreams, heartache, and crushed hopes that I can draw upon. [laughter] Right now, I've got a good job. I'm a truck driver, but I'm at the point where I feel like I've got more things I wanna yell about than ever before. What's a nineteen-year-old kid really have to be pissed about?

**Hanson:** "Aw man, I don't have to pay rent yet—fuck!"

**Magoo:** Why would you stop playing just because you're older? It's like, "I'm eighteen and I'm mad at the world," when you don't even understand the world. I'm twenty-five and I'm madder than ever.

**Ryan:** I know! Totally! Who goes, "Oh, I'm an adult now. I used to love eating lasagna when I was a kid, but that's kid's stuff. How can I keep enjoying lasagna—I'm way too old!"

**Kevin:** Don't you think you've made sacrifices for your music? Some people just get to a point in their life where they're like, "Shit, I'm fucking twenty-eight-years-old and the fact that I'm playing in a band has made me a loser."

**Hanson:** The fact that I have an enjoyable hobby.

**Magoo:** I enjoy being a loser. This is what I wanna do.

**Hanson:** "I wanna build model train sets." Well, if you wanna do that, then go the hell ahead.

**Magoo:** Yeah, you can build model train sets.

**Kevin:** It's one thing, though, when you're sixteen and you say, "I'm gonna build model train sets for the rest of my life!" But then you reach a certain age where you look around and you're the only person still into building model train sets and you have to hang out with fifteen-year-olds.

**Ryan:** Well, here's the thing: if you've got it inside you to do what you want. See, now we're talking about an issue of the will. Everybody has had, at some point in their lives, a crappy job and just hung out and partied on the weekends, but then they make that conscious decision to change. Or maybe there's external pressure from parents or whoever: "When are you gonna get your shit together?" Or "Well, you're dating this girl. Is it serious yet?" See, here's what I think the secret is to happiness in life...

**Hanson:** You heard it here first!

**Ryan:** ...Dramatic pause. Get a life doing what you wanna do, and then just find a job

that allows you to live that life. Many people get stuck with thinking—especially if they're racking up twenty grand in student loans—that, "Hey, I've gotta get this job and then try to squeeze whatever rare moments of pleasure I can out of my life." When I look around at my friends and family members and people I grew up with, I can see the choices those people have made and I just think, "Okay, I just need to stay the fuck away from *that*." Basically, you've just gotta have the will—like Magoo said—to do what you wanna do, but that's easier said than done for most people. But that's another thing, when people start preaching on the supposed tenets of punk rock and try to encapsulate aggressive three-chord guitar rock into some big lifestyle or cult or universal thing. No, no, no. For me it's just completely personal. When I go down in the fuckin' basement, turn on my guitar amp, and just stand there and try to come up with something for an hour what am I thinking about? The greater punk community at large? No, I really just wanna rock! To me, that's what it comes down to—not politics, fashion, religion, diet, fucking abstinence...

**Hanson:** Fucking abstinence? That's a contradiction in terms!

**Ryan:** Fucking Abstinence is a good name for a band, by the way. [laughter] But, to me, punk rock is more about the rock than about the punk—I wanna rock, ya know? I love music. Not any of the peripheral shit that goes with it. I wanna rock and kick some ass and have fun and have people sing and dance and that's it.

**Magoo:** But you don't have to if you don't want to. I'm not gonna yell at you if you don't dance or have fun. You can just sit there and watch.

**Hanson:** You don't even have to move up closer! "Oh no, there's an empty space in front of us. You better walk up and watch us perform even if you hate us!"

**Ryan:** It's funny because I get the impression at this point that we're such a super-loud assault that even when people are into it, they don't wanna get too close because we're blowin' it...

**Hanson:** Oh we're blowin' it, alright.

**Ryan:** But I think it's important for it to be a visceral assault, too. I want to feel it.

**Hanson:** It's gotta be so loud that you can't think about anything else.

**Magoo:** Also, you can make as many mistakes as you want because nobody will be able to hear. [laughter]

**Ryan:** That's right. That's why recording is so nerve-wracking. It's like I'm asking these guys before we record, "So what do you actually do during this part because I can never fucking tell."

**Hanson:** Wait, you actually use the dots on the fretboard? Come on!

**Ryan:** If I was trying to describe the music I want to make, it should be catchy, it should be interesting...

**Hanson:** Hooks and balls.

**Ryan:** Hooks and balls is perfect. It's like kick my ass, but I want to remember it, you know? Like I can go see any crust band and it'll be a total black T-shirt assault, but when it's over you can't remember anything that

just happened, it was just RRROOOAAARRR!!! (Just like the Voivod album of the same name!)

**Magoo:** I'd like to make a quick statement because you mentioned black T-shirts. I think if we're going to make any political statement as a band, I mean regardless of what you're wearing right now... black T-shirts... I'm completely against them.

**Hanson:** They cover up blood stains so well!

**Magoo:** Having gone to so many hardcore shows where I'm among two or three people wearing a shirt that has colors on it—it's fucking ridiculous and it's insulting to my eyes. How about cheering up a little bit and putting on some color every once in a while?

**Ryan:** That's why, on our last tour, I took all border shirts, which we will now explain. I'm batting 1.000—knock on cardboard—getting into Canada using my clever charms but to all bands reading this, you gotta get some border shirts. You need a shirt with buttons, some sort of pattern, a lightweight model, and then you pull up to the guy at the Customs booth and say, "Good morning, Sir! We'd like to pass on through!"

**Magoo:** Yeah, no dreadlocks and a black band shirt, we're talking a nice buttndown...

**Kevin:** Wisconsin camo!

**Ryan:** We rocked the border shirts last tour and apparently all Canada wants to know is if you're bringing pepper spray into the country, or at least that's what I was specifically asked. "Do you have any pepper spray in the vehicle?" "No." "Welcome to Canada!"

**Kevin:** Do you think Canada is to America what the U.P. (Upper Peninsula of Michigan) is to Wisconsin?

**Magoo:** Definitely, except the U.P. doesn't charge an arm and a leg for beer.

**Ryan:** And the U.P. probably doesn't have Chinese restaurants... at all. They were driven out by the pasta places.

**Hanson:** Yeah, how about we put some non-seasoned meat—we don't even know what salt is—how about we put that in some dough and heat it up?

**Kevin:** You better not be talking shit on pasties, man, 'cause that's the only reason I go up there. [laughter]

**Ryan:** Back to Canada, I've only been to Montreal once and that was in a brutal blizzard but I learned this: Montreal has no ugly women.

**Magoo:** No, it doesn't. It must be something like you know how in China they kill girl babies? Well in Montreal, ugly women are being killed. [laughter]

**Ryan:** [long pause] Did we use up all your questions?

**Kevin:** Yeah, a long time ago.

**Magoo:** Hey, do you got a bag of weed?

**Kevin:** I wish. Actually, that was gonna be my last question—which one of you guys has weed?





# POTENTIAL JOHNS

Interview  
by Todd  
Taylor

Photos  
by Todd  
Taylor  
& Jay  
Gussin

Layout by  
Lauren  
measures





To put The Potential Johns in a bit of musical context, they employ much of what's great about the Marked Men. It's punk rock that's mature without losing its youthful unease and wonder. It's music where the curative functions of crafting badass songs prevail over spreadsheets or scene points. The Zombies and Saints instead of Soundscan and "lifestyle profiling." It's music played by older dudes who have sacrificed quite a bit to continue playing music in order to continue seeing those magical sparks fly.

No, the Potential Johns aren't some bloated, self-indulgent side project. They play earnest, preternaturally itchy-catchy music. When the band plays out now—I caught them at The Fest last year—I was struck once again how self-effacing Jeff is as he turned away from the audience and toward his amp during an intricate part of a song. It was another small gesture that downplayed how talented and thoughtful The Potential Johns' music really is.

**Jeff:** I wasn't a musical prodigy, but I did grow up in a pretty musical family. Everyone in my family liked to sing, but I preferred the instrumental side of music. I got my drum set at age eleven and then my first guitar the next year.

**Jeff:** I'm pretty shy, in general. I don't think it's just music. Being shy makes me hesitant to show people my ideas.

**Jeff:** People are surprised, even now. A co-worker will hear a CD—or if they come to see us play—it's always surprising because I'm always quiet at work and in my day-to-day life. The bands I play in are usually pretty loud and very different from my personality.

**Jeff:** The first thing that gets your attention is the energy, the live show. To me, performing music has to be very energetic and that's the only way I'd really feel comfortable doing it. I couldn't really play an acoustic set. Also a lot of the ideas and the ethics involved in the punk scene are attractive to me.

**Todd:** What was the progression between being a very young musician to being in the Vomit Punks? Was it a reaction or was it something you saw as a healthy extension of what you'd learned before?


**Jeff:** If I remember right, the Vomit Punx started before I ever took any serious guitar lessons. I had a few lessons with a couple of different guys, but I didn't really learn much. Pretty soon after the Vomit Punx formed, I started taking jazz guitar lessons from the high school band director. He was really amazing at teaching and at playing the guitar. Before that, I was into metal and the local grindcore scene. Punk bands sometimes played with the grindcore bands... so I guess that was how I got into punk. I don't think I ever really thought too much about why I was into punk back then. I just felt most comfortable when I was with my punk friends and playing punk music.

**Todd:** Jeff, we're both also an anomaly in punk rock because we're a little bit older than most people involved with it. And I have a feeling that the Potential Johns aren't flag wavers, but in what real ways have you internalized what you were exposed to when you were younger into your day-to-day life now? We can all say "government's bad, corporations suck," and that's correct, but how did you internalize that into what you do daily?

**Jeff:** That's a tough question. Basically, I always try to keep those ideas in mind in my day-to-day life. I'm not very politically active or anything like that, but I try not to do anything that would be against the ethics I've learned from punk rock.







**Todd:** There has to be some motivation for taking the time and effort, over the years, making your studio, and going out of your way to forge longtime relationships with bands in Denton like the Chop Sakis and High Tension Wires, growing out to bands nationwide. Why is that important to you? Why, at any level, haven't you sought out to something on a larger musical scale?

**Jeff:** For me, first of all, I don't think I'd ever want music to be my profession because I feel like it's my therapy, what I have to look forward to, so I wouldn't want to do it full time. Also, any time business has mixed in too much with what any of my bands have done, it's always left a real sour feeling in my stomach and everybody else's. We try to stay away from the business side of music as much as we possibly can. It's not really an issue with the Potential Johns because there haven't been many shows, releases, or tours, but the Marked Men have always tried to avoid using booking agencies, guarantees, or anything else that could potentially interfere with the relationships we've formed with people in the music scene. I don't think we've damaged any of those relationships because of business and that really helps us in the long run.

**Todd:** Does the attention you're getting as a musician bother you?

**Jeff:** Overall, I'm pretty comfortable with the level we're at. The people who want to see us are able to see us and we can meet just about anybody who comes to our shows. The majority of the people who listen to either band probably have a lot in common with us, so it's great to get the chance to meet them. I can feel uncomfortable with any kind of attention that I don't feel is necessary, of people putting us on a pedestal, but I don't really think that happens too much. Everything that's happened so far is pretty good.

**Todd:** Are there aspects that you wish were easier or more available to bands like yours? For instance—your records, I'm talking about the Potential Johns specifically, but even the Marked Men—there seem to be such small windows of time to get the records when they first come out. It seems like you have to be dialed in prior to the release to get those records. Do you ever wish they were more widely available? And we're not talking massive, over-done amounts, but a couple more pressings?

**Jeff:** I would want anybody who really wanted it to be able to get it. In a few cases, it would have been better to get more records out there. With the Marked Men, we're trying to get the first record out there, get it re-pressed so people don't pay ridiculous amounts. We don't like it when we see somebody paying too much for one of our records when we feel that it's something that could easily be re-pressed.

**Todd:** The Potential Johns—people probably don't know—is a band that's been going on for quite some time.

**Jeff:** I think it was about '96. The band started off with just Patrick, one of the founders of the Riverboat Gamblers, and me. I met Patrick through some of my friends at college. We became pretty good friends and eventually he came up with the idea for the band. Another friend, Ronnie, started playing drums with us after a while. We started doing it just for fun; not really taking it seriously or anything. That lasted about one or two years. We just played the house shows, at our house. The band was just something fun to do. Patrick started the Riverboat Gamblers with Mike and Fadi not too long after that. So he was playing with them until

recently. Ronnie went to school in Colorado and now he works in L.A. for some kind of celebrity management company.

**Todd:** What did you go to school for?

**Jeff:** I originally came to school in 1994 for jazz guitar, but I quit that after two years. The guitar program focused mainly on written music and I felt like my creativity was dying. I eventually decided to go back to school so I would be able to get a job in Japan. I'm currently finishing up an undergraduate program in Denton. I'm going to graduate with an English/linguistics degree and a Japanese language minor.

**Todd:** Where did the name of the band come from?

i don't think  
i'd ever want  
music to be my  
profession because  
i feel like it's  
my therapy

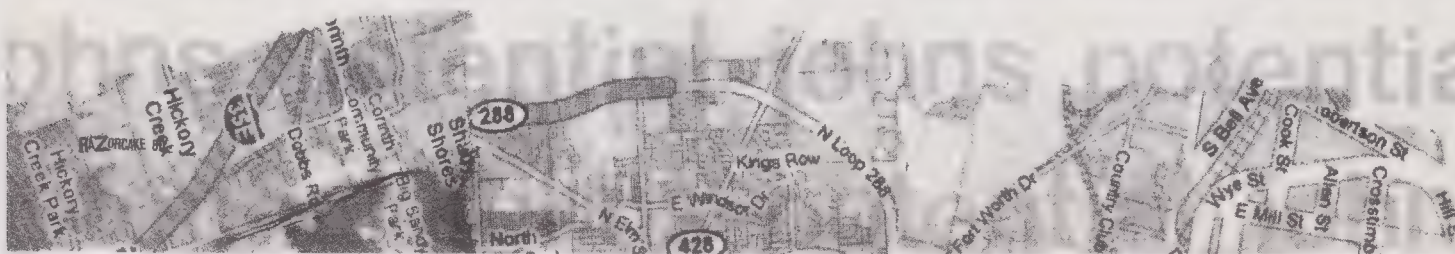
**Jeff:** That was Patrick's idea. He was watching the news and they were talking about "a potential john" who was going to solicit sex with a prostitute. He just liked the phrase.

**Todd:** It didn't start with only you playing all of the instruments in the studio?

**Jeff:** No.

**Todd:** Okay, then at what point did you start thinking, "I've got to keep a record for myself"? There was a recording floating around with just you playing all the instruments.

**Jeff:** I'm not sure if I ever thought about it exactly like that. With the Vomit Punx and my other bands before that, I just went along with what everyone else wanted to do. Being able to play was good enough. I didn't really care about recording. But





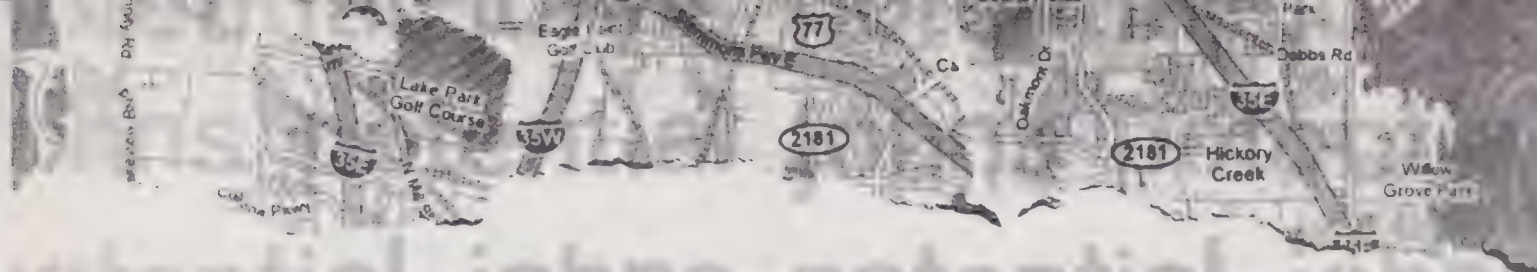
**Todd:** Like a musical diary?

**Todd:** Am I correct that you played all the instruments on it?

**Jeff:** For those recordings, yes. It was really basic. I just had

BAZORCAKE 59





**Todd:** What was your first full-time job?

**Jeff:** My first steady full-time job was at a large facility for people with mental retardation. It's the same kind of work I'm doing now, but then I was working with many people who couldn't do much for themselves. I assisted with feeding, showering, training, and many other daily life activities.

**Todd:** What do you do for your night job?

**Jeff:** I work in a group home where six men with mental disabilities live. I've worked for the same company for ten years, but I've only been working in this house for the past three years. At night, while they're sleeping, I watch over things, do some cleaning, and take care of some daily paperwork. In the morning, I start getting everybody up so they can get ready for work. They all work at the same workshop, along with about 75 other people with similar disabilities. I just watch over and make sure that they

can get through their morning routine as smoothly as possible. They do all of their own cooking, grooming, and medication. I pretty much just supervise and help where they need help.

**Todd:** Do you ever find yourself thinking about songs when you're there?

**Jeff:** I guess so. Luckily, I have some time during the night where I can do some studying or play the guitar if I want. I have worked on music at work before, but it's usually at home, when I'm playing the guitar, that an idea will come to me.

**Todd:** It sounds like you've set up nice nest for yourself—you have the machines in place so you can lay stuff down and put things together. It's my experience that you can be immediately more focused that way, too.

**Jeff:** When I have everything set up, it's a lot easier to get stuff done.

**Todd:** Talking a little bit about songwriting, into your involvement from

the Vomit Punx to the Reds, what was your transition into doing more melody-based music? The Potential Johns have more in common with The Zombies than they do with Suicidal Tendencies.

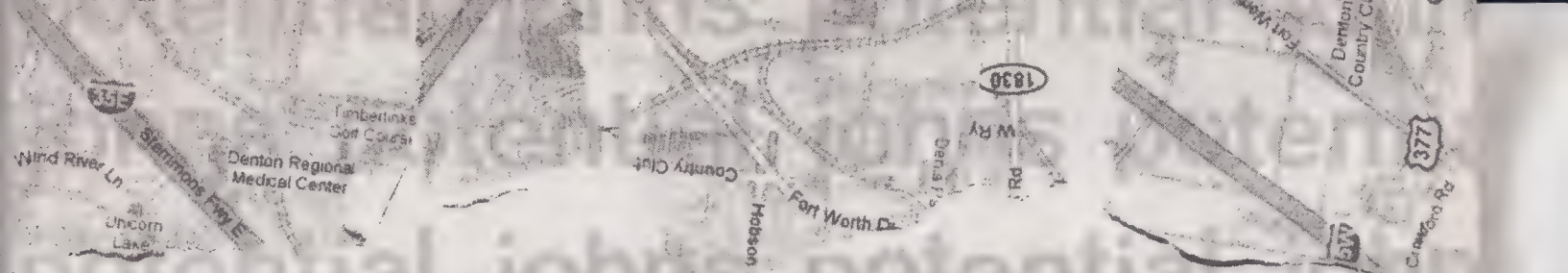
**Jeff:** The main thing—in the Vomit Punx and in the Reds—I didn't really help develop the sound. I guess I did a little bit with the Vomit Punks. We all wrote the songs right there in practice. In the Reds, I was not an original member. When I joined I just learned their style at first. Eventually I wrote a few songs. But with the Potential Johns and Marked Men, those were bands where I could write whatever I wanted to and most of the stuff I write, in general, is melodic.

**Todd:** Do you find any overlap between the Potential Johns and Marked Men?

**Jeff:** Some of the first songs for the Potential Johns were a little bit more garagey, but pretty loose rhythmically. Being in the Reds, my music writing







changed a lot because there was a lot more focus on the rhythm. To me, there's some sort of difference between a Marked Men and a Potential Johns song. If I wrote a song now, I would know, pretty much right away, whether it would work in either of those bands. I won't sit down and try to write a song for a particular band, it just ends up working out one of the two ways.

**Todd:** What's made you a more confident songwriter over the years?

**Jeff:** I have been writing punk songs for so long now that I don't worry much about what people will think. It also really helps to hear it recorded. If I really like the finished song, then I can be confident in it.

**Todd:** The Potential Johns are scheduled to break up in 2016? Is that a Crass self-destruction thing or is that just a joke?

**Jeff:** Yeah. It's just... [laughs] yeah. I just felt that it shouldn't be going now. It's a little bit ridiculous that we're playing again.

**Todd:** How many shows have the Potential Johns played?

**Jeff:** Somewhere around thirty. The most happened the first time around with the original three guys. We played a lot of the house parties in Denton. The drummer from the Riverboat Gamblers later took over and we played a bunch more shows and then there were a couple shows in between, now and then, with one of my roommates and my brother. Then, in the last couple years, there have been a few shows with my brother on bass, Joe, from the Marked Men, on guitar, and Jason, who plays in a bunch of Denton bands, on drums. Almost all of the shows have been in Denton, except for the more recent shows with the current lineup in Chicago, Florida, and Austin.

# JEFF BURKE DISCOGRAPHY

## BANDS WITH RELEASES ON RECORD:

### Drums:

Line Of Fire (CT/East Coast HC)

Chop-sakis (TX/Punk)

The Rolemodels (TX/Punk)

E-Class (TX/Punk)

High Tension Wires (TX/Punk)

### Guitar:

Vomit Punx (CT/Punk)

Potential Johns (TX/Punk)

The Reds (TX/Punk)

Marked Men (TX/Punk)

**Todd:** Festivals. Another thing I've found interesting about the Potential Johns is that your brother keeps on popping up. He's done the artwork for the split LP and the Sandwich Man 7". Are you close to him?

**Jeff:** Yeah. Growing up, I followed him around everywhere. Basically, I was with him all day, every day except for school. He did music, so I did music in school. I

didn't really have any desire to join any of the music programs when I was a kid. I have a sister, too, who was also in a lot of the vocal groups. I kind of just did it because they did it. It's pretty weird when my brother and I don't live near each other.

**Todd:** I take it that he's a little older?

**Jeff:** Three years older.

**Todd:** Is your brother a fan?

**Jeff:** Well, he's probably just used to my music. We've played music together since we were kids so I think he probably likes more of my music than the average person does. My brother, he moved to Texas for a year when I was still in high school, and then came back and wanted to go back to Texas. So I searched for a school in Texas that would be good for what I wanted to do and followed him here. We've been pretty close to each other since then.

**Todd:** What did your parents do?

**Jeff:** They both have Ph.D.s. My dad works in the quality control department of a hospital. He makes sure that families and patients are treated well. He consults with doctors, nurses and other hospital staff to make sure that the overall quality of care

in america, being out going  
is considered a strength, but  
in japan, restraint is viewed as  
a better quality. so being shy  
doesn't seem as strange.





in the hospital is good. My mom teaches Psychology part-time at the University of Connecticut. Her focus is in women's studies.

**Todd:** Did what they do affect you in any discernable way when you were growing up?

**Jeff:** They got into both of those jobs later on. There were a lot of different jobs. I'm not sure how much their work affected me.

**Todd:** Did you feel pressured by your parents to do something specific, or was it a cool, open-ended environment?

**Jeff:** There was no pressure at all. I pretty much decided myself that I wanted to play music. Once I got my guitar, music is all I wanted to do.

**Todd:** Also, generally, your parents seem socially conscious and wanting to take care of people.

**Jeff:** I think what affected us the most—my brother, sister, and I—were my parents' attitudes towards everything. We lived in New Mexico for awhile. They taught at a university and they were members of one of the churches there and they were always inviting the exchange students over. We were often in a pretty culturally rich environment. People from around the world were around us a lot of the time. I think that helped us become open minded in general. As far as musically, I'm not sure. I'm sure that going to church has a lot to do with how we all developed musically. In the church we went to, everybody sang. I didn't really like singing so much, but I liked listening to my family and everyone else around me.

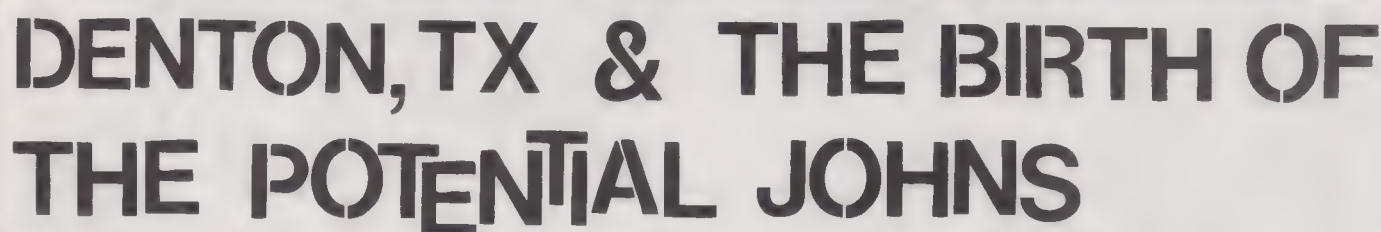
**Todd:** It's nice to share experiences with people you're close with in different contexts. I think many people have forgotten how to have a social atmosphere within your family.

**Jeff:** We had a very good family experience. I have, basically, no negative memories of growing up.

**Todd:** That must give you a lot of quiet confidence in what you're doing—positioning music in your life where it serves a therapeutic function instead of vanity, or trying to make music a defining point to become even lower-version punk rock "superstar." An ego feed.

**Jeff:** That's probably one of the reasons why it becomes a therapy or a hobby. My parents have a good life. I'm, maybe, following their footsteps in some way by





The second experience was a live show that came at exactly the right time in his life. Jeff was on a bad three-date tour of Texas playing drums for the Rolemodels. Nothing

7"s became audio calling cards, helping touring bands wanting shows and helping our local bands make it out of Texas. Past and present members of the Potential Johns lived in the Bonnie Brae House in Denton. The band had easy access to a growing and successful punk scene. They could walk from their bedrooms to the living room to see bands like At the Drive-in, Hickey, F.Y.P., Dillinger Four, Jimmy Eat World, and Action Patrol. Different styles of music and punk were flooding into Denton. The Bonnie Brae House was also the location of the first shows of the Riverboat Gamblers, the Reds, and the Chop-sakis. This heavy influence of touring DIY punk bands and the success and excitement of our local bands made Denton one of the best places in America for punk rock between the years of 1996-2000. This scene helped Jeff and others develop personal dos and don'ts for their perception of punk rock ethics and musical tastes.



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finishing school and looking for something else. No matter what, music will always be a part of my life, for sure.

**Todd:** Is there a song that you've had around for years and years and you just can't finish it?

**Jeff:** I do have songs... I think a lot of that is if the drum style is a little bit different; I'm intimidated by recording it, so it just sits there forever. A lot of the old Potential Johns songs—the stuff I wasn't really sure about—I would just record the drums and work the song around the drum line. That's how it became the final copy. Most of the songs I really like, I end up working out somehow.

**Todd:** Do you think it's important that you've created a small, protective bubble around what you do?

**Jeff:** When I started my first full-time job, the thing I liked about it the most was that people didn't associate me with music. Pretty much my whole life, in high school and especially the first couple years of college because I was in the jazz music program, all of my friends always talked about music. Music was somehow involved in most of my social interactions. When I started my job, it never came up. I really enjoyed having the two separate lives.

**Todd:** Another thing you're currently doing is recording other bands. What's the difference between being an artist recording himself versus being an engineer recording other people?

**Jeff:** That's pretty tough for me. I wouldn't agree to record just anybody. It has to be a band where I feel like I kind of know what they're going for and I think I can get what they want done, but it is very nerve-racking trying to do someone else's music with the fear that it's not going to come out the right way. When we're doing our own stuff, we can change it as many times as we want until we get it how we have it in our heads. It's really hard to get that for other bands.

**Todd:** The band is asking you to paint a musical portrait that you both have a basic idea of, but it's like two people holding the brush at the same time. That's my understanding of recording.

**Jeff:** It does make me really nervous. Most of the experiences I've had so far, the people that I've worked with, they don't have a really set idea and they are curious to how it's going to turn out and are more relaxed about it than I.

**Todd:** One of the reasons I like The Potential Johns / Chinese Telephones split LP so much is that the bands are similar—

# FREE PIZZA

Little Caesars used to have this machine in their lobbies that was like that old game Simon that had four colors, each with its own tone. The machine would flash a color, and while sounding out a tone, you had to repeat it. Each round, it would add an extra color/tone. Well, at Little Caesars, if you could get about ten in a row, you would win a drink, twenty and you win crazy bread, but if you could get about thirty in a row, they would give you a free pizza. Whenever Jeff and I would go on road trips, we didn't have to pay for food if we could find a Little Caesars because Jeff could win a pizza every time. Little Caesars employees would always say it was the first time anyone had ever beat the machine, and Jeff could beat it almost every where we went. The funny thing about this is Jeff is color blind. (He's so color blind that he stops at flashing yellow lights, just in case they are red.) So, he would ignore the flashing colors on the Little Caesars game and just memorize the notes that were coming out of the machine as if it was a song. It was a spectacle to actually see him do it. He just understands music.

definitely not the same—and they seem to have different approaches to making music, but there are a lot of elements that fans of one band would appreciate about the other.

**Jeff:** The Potential Johns being released at all, I pretty much owe that to Justin from the Chinese Telephones. He and my brother were the ones who planted the seed and made me go through with it. I'm really happy with the split and being able to get to know those guys.

**Todd:** It's very gratifying to get to know people through music, but also to establish friendships that go way beyond that... That Potential Johns demo tape that was circulating was thirty or forty songs. Do you have plans to release an LP of that material?

**Jeff:** A lot of that will have to do with how much time I end up having. But there are plans to release an LP of all the old stuff. Then, probably, some 7"s of newer songs. A split with Tulsa on Sandwich Man. A Dirtnap 7".

**Todd:** Are you still excited about music? Do you still think it's a vibrant community or are there just these isolated oases scattered about?

**Jeff:** In general, I enjoy it just as much now as I ever did. It is harder for me, now, to musically get into as many bands. It's not as fresh to me. When I was younger, everything flooded in. I loved it all. Being older and being in the scene for so long and having these long relationships with people who have been doing the same thing, I find myself more selective. But, there are people and places that still get me really excited about music and punk in general. In Austin, for example, there are a lot of people who are still doing really good stuff and are really supportive of the scene. Thanks to places like that, I still have a really positive feeling about music.



# SVARTENBRANDT



It's so easy to trap yourself within genres and influences. Over the years, punk has taken many forms and a good amount of them are worth paying attention to and learning from. To me, the band Svartenbrandt—named after a bank robber—sounds like people who have been paying attention. When listening to their first, and most recent, full-length *Från Andra Sidan Spåren*... It seems that they have not only been heavily influenced by the last three decades of punk but have gained inspiration from many other genres: from the folk music of their native country, Sweden, to contemporary experimental artists from around the world. To me, there are no obvious references to make, which is exciting. And on top of the aggression are some well thought-out lyrics that present interesting and new ideas regarding such things as the disintegration of social programs and how punk/hardcore is perceived by the general public, due to the violent nature of its shows. While there are a lot of bands that I anxiously await new music from, Svartenbrandt sits at a table with few others, a table consisting of bands who I have no idea what to expect from. Svartenbrandt melds hardcore punk with haunting group melodies and musicianship that transports you to the bleakest locations of Scandinavia. It's unreal at times. It's great to listen to a band that is willing to make music that even they seem to be confounded by.

INTERVIEW BY GALEN JONES  
AND DARYL DUNSON

PHOTOS BY ANDERS FREDRIKSSON  
LAYOUT BY NIKITA DUNSON





**Arlen:** What on earth is that loud clip on "Dåliga Fider"?

**Repetier:** It's from a Swedish television show called *Gömda pengar Alla Barn* (Hidden Money Kids). The TV show captures all the fear, anxiety, and absurdities of the Swedish school system in a comical way. It's like Twin Peaks but in Sweden, and with humor! The school inspector, who is the one speaking in the sound clip, pushes everything this institution stands for. In the sound clip he's expressing his feelings toward a fellow colleague: "You are, mildly expressed, a sick, sick, sick, sick person." We felt it completely fit the misanthropic theme of the song, which you can easily feel after twelve years in the Swedish school system.

**Arlen:** Do you find it interesting that suburban kids in Southern California and kids in Sweden both, in a generalization, both find their respective educational systems to be mind-numbing exercises in Orwellian doom?

**Repetier:** I think kids in general feel that the school system steals their time and energy and robs them of information they don't know how to use. I'm studying to become a teacher and I often feel that schools fail in creating individual education and instead concentrate on controlling and disciplining kids while their parents are at work. No wonder kids get Orwellian vibes off of that. Is Sweden any different when it comes to school and growing up? I'd guess it's pretty much the same as far as boredom goes. It either forces your creativity or makes you passive and depressive. But Sweden is smaller and more cold than Utah. We don't have that many bad cities, so a lot of the punk action still goes on in rural areas. We all come from small villages and towns surrounding Linköping. I don't know if we feel alienated in another way than you do in the states because of that. I don't mean to say that, but this comes down to us having long cold winter days with four hours worth of daylight. But there's a richness in togetherness and state of alienation in Nordic punk lyrics compared to the American ones. Just listen to Acared. Ain't that something?

**Arlen:** How do you guys go about writing these subtly complicated songs?

**Repetier:** I don't know, really. It just comes. We started out writing pretty basic and simple hardcore punk songs and played them as fast as possible. Then we kept the speed but added melody, basically. I guess this was around the time when we changed our name from Cardiac Arrest to Svartenbrandt, stopped stealing riffs from SSD and attempted to steal riffs from Raped Teenagers. Then, around two years ago, three of us moved in together and the fourth guy pretty much became part of the rejection. We had all access to each other's record collections and instruments, and it started an explosion in songwriting, with our influences expanding into more old American and Swedish melodic punk. Some songs ended up with Svartenbrandt, others with Young Fit Mares, Raw, and other side projects.

**Arlen:** Is there some sort of criteria by which you choose which songs go where? Or are these sacred differentia?

**Repetier:** Well, obviously we give the closest rocking ones to Raw, and the mid-tempo melodic ones to YFM. We've developed some sort of sense for what sort of songs should go where. But sometimes it's hard to hold your loyalty to Svartenbrandt. A lot of the more melodic songs and bits of songs have ended up with YFM because we simply needed material. I guess this loyalty goes with the grade of activity in the different projects.

**Daryl:** I felt what made your songs so great was the range of influences. Can you describe the Linköping sound?

**Repetier:** To start with, I don't know if Svartenbrandt is representative for the Linköping sound, if there really is one. The Linköping bands that we draw influences from are old and pretty obscure, with the exception of Raped Teenagers. To me, the Linköping sound is characterized by aggressive, to-the-point, and often very hardcore punk. Think Outcast, Scenars, Berusad Trunk, Inmatt, Fast To Lose, and the other big bands from here. Kids in Linköping have never been lucky enough to see all the top bands coming through town on their way to Stockholm. We have always been aware of changing tastes and sounds around here. Thus, when *Svartenbrandt* started, we took some hands clearly influenced by them, subtly pumped in out of nowhere. The same thing has happened with *Raw*, *Fit Mares*, *YFM*, *What Happens Next*, and other bands that have found Sweden. These bands must have a short life span that they are made to create punk hype. You have to understand that Linköping is a small place, and the amount of possible contribution for new bands are pretty limited. But when this small crowd of people gets interested, they will start to form a band and try out these influences. It's a good thing, I guess, since some of these bands survive their first shows in Sweden and many even make it out of town. Truthfully, this is pretty much what happened with Svartenbrandt back when we were Cardiac Arrest. We started out when the *Tragedy* hype had died out and the scene had returned to its simple and basic hardcore punk.

**Daryl:** What's Skyten?

**Repetier:** Skyten is a venue for shows and linköping's largest place where most bands of the scene rehearse and hang out. When Svartenbrandt have an office there and we used to run a cafe there for a month or two. Skyten has been hosting punk shows since the mid-80s. Some different punk-oriented shows, concerts, and events have taken place there home there. The place is very useful to meet and talk to many other punks and volunteers. The only ones who have provided the venue for the shows are the punks, which is why it has become "our" place. Kids from punk organizations put on shows there, Kl, Brain and ASD. Skyten. We ourselves have one big show organizer in Orkid, but it has been quite a few different factions. Skyten is known to host festivals such as the annual *Linköping Hardcore Fest*, monthly to weekly gigs, and sometimes parties and art exhibitions. It is the hub of all punk activity in town, and it is really intended by the ones in Svartenbrandt who have moved to other cities.

**Daryl:** What's the Skyten scene?

**Repetier:** The House of Skyten is something many punk bands have encountered when spending the night at our hotel on the second floor. Skyten is an old steel factory, and supposedly the woman who worked there threw herself out of the window in the very first. She has haunted the place ever since!

**Daryl:** Any noteworthy stories come to mind?

**Rabiatrisk:** Don't know, really, except that there have actually been musicians refusing to sleep there, ending up paying for a hotel instead.

**Arlen:** How does her ghost manifest herself according to the rumors?

**Repetier:** In the body of an overworked, suicidal woman whose eyes tell the tragic story of a soul that can't find refuge or ever get her mind rest. If she speaks, it's in perfect eighteen hundreds-östgötska (the local dialect).

**Daryl:** Where we live, the punks eat burritos, and we find things to be really spicy. I've heard the Swedish people there like spicy food, and I was wondering what the punks eat in Sweden.



**"You are, mildly expressed,  
a sick, sick, sick,  
sick person."**



**"We figured our immense popularity would turn those fifteen cents into hundred dollar bills in no time, but people seem to prefer to download them free of charge instead."**



**Rabiatrik:** Well, I guess it's kind of true about Swedes and spicy food. If you look at typical "Swedish" food, it is not very spicy or at least not hot. But I think it's changing. More and more "exotic" food is becoming ordinary, and the Swedes' culinary tastes are being opened up. In our part of the punk/hardcore scene, vegetarian and vegan food are most common, and with that I think spices are really important. Many vegetarian and vegan punks are really into cooking and experimenting with food, so we all like to spice it up. Tofu, beans, potatoes, and certain all require imagination for good results. The most common food in Sweden is "punk stew." It's usually improvised with a base of tomatoes and whatever vegetables, beans, soy meat, and spices you have at hand. Then you serve it with bread, rice, potatoes, or pasta. Sometimes it's awesome, but, unfortunately, most of the times it's pretty dull.

**Arlen:** I heard kebabs and South Asian foods are blowing up up there. Do you find that the slow trickle of immigration from South Asia and the Middle East is bringing some new life to the punk scene or to the dominant culture in general?

**Rabiatrik:** Yeah, kebabs and Asian food is really common nowadays. And I think pretty popular. Kebabs and flatbreads have been around for quite some time, so they are just as "Swedish" as pizza. I think woks and Indian food are pretty "in" right now. I think people are opening up. Sorry to say that there are not that many immigrants within the punk scene. I wish there would be more. The punk scene is still pretty white, male, and middle class. But slowly I think (hope) it's changing. Sweden is a segregated country, but we think we're not.

**Daryl:** Who is Lars-Inge Svantebrandt?

**Rabiatrik:** The classic questions. Lars-Inge is the most famous and notorious bank robber in Swedish history (I think). He has been in and out of institutions for his whole life. He is like the symbol of "bad guys" or maybe a concept of evil in Sweden. He is also an example of the failures in the Swedish justice system and rehabilitation.

**Daryl:** Why is the band named after him?

**Rabiatrik:** The band, then known as Cardiac Arrest, was in a period of change. We started to write songs in Swedish and we were changing our sound. We also discovered the St. Louis band Cardiac Arrest, so we had to have a new name. We wanted something Swedish, recognizable, and perhaps slightly provocative. The surname of an infamous bank robber like Svantebrandt seemed to suit us. Some of our lyrics deal with questions/feelings about alienation, sanity, insanity, and actually one about thoughts on robbing banks, so the name fitted. It also became inspirational. Lars-Inge's autobiography inspired some of our lyrics. He has some really interesting views on his own criminal life, rehabilitation, normality, sanity and so on. And as a funny little anecdote, one of our friends actually got her copy of our 7" signed by Lars-Inge!

**Daryl:** So he's a free man now?

**Rabiatrik:** Yes, I think he is free. Last I heard about him was that he turned Buddhist and became a monk. He also wrote a new book. I haven't read it yet. It is exciting to see how long he will be out this time.

**Daryl:** First thing I heard by you guys was the full-length, and I was totally blown away by how raging it was while also being very interesting and different from most hardcore punk. So I went back and picked up your 7" and it was really good too, but it wasn't nearly as out-there as the full-length. What happened to the band that made you guys create such a crazy, progressive album?

**Repeter:** I don't think much happened to the band besides us getting to know our instruments and capacities for playing fast without losing emphasis on melody. During this time we rehearsed almost every day of the week and we had a lot of time to throw around ideas for songs. We made a recording of twenty-two songs of which we kept ten of the songs that would later make it to the CD. I don't necessarily feel that the album is crazy or progressive, but it draws on a wide range of influences that we hadn't allowed ourselves to use before. I guess we just didn't want to write the same song twice.

**Arlen:** You guys always throw in these really haunting melodic breakdowns and group (singing) vocals. Where does that come from?

**Illnus:** As much as we love to listen to hardcore punk all day long, we do appreciate other genres as well. I listen to lots of experimental music, and to quite a bit of folk music, actually.

**Repeter:** I'd say that our influences outside of the punk scene can be heard from time to time in the music. Illnus might know something folkish, and I have been known to steal riffs from Bruce Springsteen from time to time.

**Arlen:** When you say folkish, do you mean American Appalachian folk or Woody Guthrie or labor songs, or do you mean more like Gammaldanskulning, or fiddle songs?

**Illnus:** I think Repeter refers to some melodic elements, certain chord progressions and so on, which share some common ground with traditional folk music. I mean, it's not as if we mix Gammaldans with hardcore punk or anything. Although that would be pretty cool.

**Daryl:** Illnus, what kind of experimental music do you listen to?

**Illnus:** Lots of minimalist noise these days, arty stuff. But to name a few household names: Charalambides, Organum, Coil, Deutsch Nepal, Brighter Death Now.

**Arlen:** Sometimes when you guys sing together, like in "Den lobbiga Javelin" or "Pa Andra Sidan Sparen," the vocal harmonies remind me of the Scandinavian folk samples bands like Bathory use. Is this all in my head?

**Rabiatrik:** Yeah, I think it is all in your head.

**Illnus:** Seriously though, like I said earlier we do listen to, and are influenced by, a whole lot of different genres. I have had a lot of "classical" music education, and I guess that kind of shines through every once in a while. But I wouldn't desecrate my ears listening to Bathory. They deserve better.

**Daryl:** I think Bathory is good to listen to in the morning when I'm getting ready for work.

**Illnus:** Well, to each his own.

**Daryl:** I remember a note I got saying two hundred copies of the CD were going to be made and I was wondering how many CDs were eventually made.





**Illnus:** We only ever did 200 and we still have copies left! (shocking!) We haven't really tried too hard to sell them either, so I guess it's partly our own fault since we haven't been very active as of late.

**Daryl:** Why isn't it going to be released on vinyl?

**Rabiatrik:** It is supposed to come out on vinyl! A lot of small fuck-ups became a pile and time passed by. But, soon, hopefully, it will be released on vinyl if Kaj at Wasted sounds still wants to do it. The idea is to release the songs from the CD as the a-side and a bunch of newer songs on the b-side.

**Daryl:** That would be tight. Same artwork and everything?

**Repeter:** Kind of. Andy from Sista Sekunden and Instigate Records is

**Repeter:** Sjalv är baste dräng! F gna barn och andras ungar!

**Daryl:** What does that mean?

**Repeter:** It's pretty much untranslatable and I can't find any English folk sayings that match, but the first one means that you are your own best friend or colleague. We use it to say that we don't need any help and that the rest of the world better not come lend a helping hand. The other one is popularly adopted by tired teachers. It is a distinction between your own children or class and other people's teachers' kids, or rascals which would imply that you'd only take responsibility for your own offspring or class and that the others mostly serve as bad examples: My own children and other people's kids.

**Daryl:** Do you remember when Olof Palme (Sweden's one-time Prime Minister) was assassinated and how much impact do you feel his assassination had on the country?

**Rabiatrik:** Yes, I do remember that. I don't know if the other guys were even born. The concrete effect the assassination had on my life, when it happened was that I was not able to watch the children programs on TV that morning, which I had been looking forward to (in those days we didn't watch that much TV, so the weekend morning show was the big thing). Later that day when my parents woke up, I told them about the shooting and I remember their reactions and realized it was something big. We can still see the effects of it. The whole country was kind of taken by surprise. Things like that don't happen here. Everyone was a suspect. They started investigating every political enemy of Palme. Conspiracy theories were thrown in every direction and the police didn't know where to go. The case is still not closed over twenty years later. Some think that the drunken bad guy Christer Pettersson simply shot the wrong guy. Some think it goes way deeper than that. But I think that most people think that we will never get the answers. A couple of years ago, another minister was killed in Sweden and I think panic kind of struck again. That



**"I do punk songs when it rains and go bird watching when the sun shines."**

doing the layout, and he might throw in some color and new pictures or something, but otherwise everything should stay just about the same.

**Daryl:** I've noticed that it can be downloaded on the internet through certain mp3 download sites. How's that working out for the band?

**Illnus:** We did spread the CD on Soulseek some time ago, but that's all the effort we've put into it. Considering all the Russian mp3 sites we're on, you'd think we be freakin' huge over there by now.

**Daryl:** How did you all decide on the price of \$0.15 per song?

**Illnus:** We figured our immense popularity would turn those fifteen cents into hundred dollar bills in no time, but people seem to prefer to download them free of charge instead. Sneaky. Well, let's just say that we still have to work for a living.

**Daryl:** What do you all do for a living?

**Illnus:** I got fed up with work, so I went back to school. I still work as a sound engineer from time to time.

**Rabiatrik:** I work as a leisure time teacher. Well, I take care of kids after school and on their holidays and so on.

**Repeter:** As I mentioned earlier, I study to become a teacher in the rainiest town in Sweden, Borås. My life right now is all about Swedish grammar and history. In my spare time, I do punk songs when it rains and go bird watching when the sun shines. To answer for Yoko who's on tour with Fy Fan: he's currently working at a home for autistic kids in Malmö. Otherwise he sings in Fy Fan and drinks a lot of folkol.

**Daryl:** Do you have a favorite Swedish folk saying?

**Rabiatrik:** Actually I think this is a really interesting question, even though I don't think I can come up with a favorite. We have been inspired by a lot of Swedish folk sayings in our lyrics (unfortunately, I think this gets lost in the translations). Many times it is not that we like the saying, but that they make a point or help us get the message across. The folk sayings also describes pictures our land people and culture, which is often what we criticize or question in our lyrics. So if you learn Swedish, you will find some folk sayings in our lyrics.

time they arrested the right guy.

**Daryl:** I heard Ronald Reagan did it, because Palme wouldn't play ball with the CIA.

**Repeter:** That's probably what happened, but if so, they sure know how to hide their tracks, or they have more power over Swedish politicians and secret service than people speculate that they have. In a couple of decades when all the information becomes official, just like in the JFK case—we might know for sure.

**Arlen:** You have a song about the Welfare State in Sweden and your beef with it. Could you explain to our sheltered readers a bit about what you meant?

**Rabiatrik:** Well, that song is critical to the parliamentary democracy in Sweden and the welfare state as well. The politicians do what is best for them or what sounds best for the majority. The social democrats in Sweden have made everyone believe that we should be glad and satisfied here. We are the most equal country in the world, we have good education...blah, blah, blah. This feeling of having it so much better than the rest of the world makes people sacrifice a lot, and it makes the Swedes sit on their asses and just trust the politicians to hold the status quo. The last election in Sweden, the right wing parties made people realize that we needed change. And people fell for the trick, "just to have some change." Working class people voted for the right wing parties and now they regret their votes. Sick people are being forced to work. It is hard to afford being in a union. The right wing alliances are really trying to dismantle the Swedish welfare state, and they will if we let them stay in charge. This song actually started some big discussions within the band. So the song became pretty open in its meaning. You can vote or not vote, either way you have to raise your voice. Say no or yes. At least think before you answer. Swedes are a people of no opinions—except for the opinions that you should have—we just go along.

**Daryl:** Have you ever felt something you might consider "Swedexploitation"? Like maybe some American or Canadian.



# HOGAN-BEACH



[www.myspace.com/hoganbeach27](http://www.myspace.com/hoganbeach27)





person thinks the band's super righteous simply because they're Swedish?

**Illnus:** I wouldn't say we've had any experience with that, but we read *MRR* just like everyone else and, sure, I guess Swedish bands are more than often raved about. But then again, there are a lot of great bands in Sweden.

**Daryl:** When Swedish bands comeback from the U.S., do they have total horror stories about this country? You can be honest. It's the only way we'll learn.

**Rabiatrik:** Yes, you do hear some horror stories. But I think the most you hear is about the amazing shows. What I heard people complain about are the long drives, no food, no sleeping places and stuff like that, but then it sounds like it's worth it because of the good shows. I don't know much about this. We should have Yoko Jäna answering this when he comes back from his U.S. tour with Fy Fan!

**Daryl:** You mention that Yoko Jäna is in Fy Fan, are there other projects that you guys are in? Musical or otherwise.

**Illnus:** I perform with an experimental industrial act a few times a year, and I also have a lot of folk music projects going on. Me and Repeter craft catchy tunes together as Young Fit Males and we just released a split "" with Hanna Hirsch.

**Rabiatrik:** I have a new band called Restless Nights where I shout rocking hardcore songs. It is nice to have something here now that we all moved apart. I also have a disco-pop-poetry-punk project with Yoko, but it is hard with the distance as well. Yoko also has pretty much with Fy Fan these days.

**Daryl:** After I listened to some of the Young Fit Males stuff, the Svartenbrandt puzzle started to make more sense. Can you give a brief description of the Young Fit Males?

**Repeter:** Young Fit Males started out as the band where Linus and I could dump the melodic riffs we felt didn't fit Svartenbrandt. The project grew to take further influences from mainly Husker Dü and Wipers kind of punk. We added a drummer and recorded a demo about a year ago and then proceeded to play a few shows in Linköping. People seemed to like it, because all of a sudden we were recording for the split with Hanna Hirsch which came out

## "Ge mig en folköl: Beer me."

earlier this year. Right now we are rehearsing with a new drummer (David from Grizzly Twister) in Göteborg.

**Arlen:** How does it make you feel to know that at least one of your fans tried to teach himself Swedish using your liner notes as a primary text? Have you always set out to be cultural ambassadors?

**Rabiatrik:** It feels amazing. Good luck. Actually, of course, it feels great to know that someone is interested in learning new languages and so on. I don't think we set out to be cultural ambassadors, but of course there is some thought behind translating our lyrics. I think music with lyric sheets are good primary texts for learning. I think motivation is the key to learning and what could be more motivating or inspiring than other cultures' music. I have learned so much of my English through lyrics. I even picked up some Spanish and some German the same way. I tried to learn these languages in school, but, fuck, those teachers and classes were so boring.

**Repeter:** Here are some lines that you might have use for when translating Swedish lyrics or, for that matter, starting your own Swedesploitation band:

Jag hatar systemet — I hate the system.

Bomberna faller, tanksen rullar in—The bombs are falling and the tanks are rolling in.

Jag är trött på skiten! Ge mig en folköl—I'm done with this! Beer me.

Krossa kapitalismen och hela jävelsamhället—Crush capitalism and the whole fucking society.

Good luck!



Punk has never really been about the big city. Sure, most people's first exposure to our unkempt little community is in grainy footage of the N.Y.C. art scene at CBGB, beautiful black and white photos of D.C.'s hardcore darlings, or movies about L.A.'s most violent degenerates, but those of us who've spent some time here know better. Punk is really about the weird kids in the Gainesvilles, Portlands, Minneapolis, and Berkeleys of the world. It's about towns. College towns, mining towns, hick towns, ghost towns, whatever. Places where it's just a little less safe to be a weirdo. Similar hotspots in the Great White North are no different. While small-town Canada has certainly spewed forth its fair share of punk rock notables since pioneers like the Pointed Sticks, Subhumans, and D.O.A. first destroyed the stage, it's possible that not since that early heyday has the north-of-the-border underground community been as active and potent as it is today.

Lead unofficially by British Columbia-based Deranged Records—home to Fucked Up, Tranzmitors, Career Suicide, and a pile of other much-lauded bands—the current Canadian punk scene is a buzzing machine of smart, sincere guys and gals, and no band better exemplifies this than Sudbury, Ontario's Statues. With a handful of releases on Radio 81 and P.Trash Records, including 2006's unbelievable *New People Make Us Nervous*, Statues (made up of vocalist/guitarist Rob Seaton and brothers Jeff and Mitch Houle on drums and bass, respectively) recently joined the Deranged Records roster for the release of their *Same Bodies, Same Faces 7"* and are doing a pretty swell job of putting The Nickel City on the map.

# STATUES

**Dave:** Tell me how this thing got started. Feel free to be long-winded. This thing's gotta be three thousand words.

**Rob:** Holy shit.

**Dave:** I know. It's massive.

**Rob:** If this was school, I would have just quit again.

**Mitch:** Rob wanted to start a new band after he left The Havocs, which Jeff and I were and still are members of. The band (Statues) started a few years back with different members. I think there were four or five at the beginning, but not everyone would show up at the practices, so I'd fill in for whoever was missing, sometimes on bass, sometimes on guitar. After about a couple of months of this sketchy arrangement, we kicked out the fretless bass player and kept it to a solid three piece, writing and rehearsing our material for about a year before even playing out live. Now we don't put in nearly that much effort.

**Dave:** So you guys have been playing together forever then?

**Rob:** Yeah. Jeff and I have since about 1995-96 and with Mitch since about, what? 1999?

**Mitch:** Wow, life-mates since 2000 or something.

**Rob:** You were like fifteen years old.

**Dave:** Did you guys all grow up in Sudbury?

**Rob:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Yup.

**Mitch:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** I moved away for about four years to Waterloo. That was okay... barely.

**Rob:** I've never left.

**Dave:** So did you know each other from shows and shit when you were youngsters?

**Rob:** I met Jeff at the bar.

**Mitch:** Well Jeff and I are brothers, so I've known him forever.

**Rob:** Paul and I from The Havocs were looking for a drummer and someone pointed Jeff out to us and that was that.

**Jeff:** On the condition that I cut off my ponytail, right?

**Rob:** True.

**Mitch:** I don't remember where or when I met Rob, but I think he was a dick and I was scared, but he was funny so that was cool.

**Rob:** Also probably true.

**Dave:** Without implying that I'd assumed otherwise, does Sudbury have a pretty bumping punk rock scene?

**Jeff:** Yeah man, things are pretty good here right now.

**Rob:** There are more than a few really good bands.

**Dave:** It actually seems to be that way almost Canada-wide right now. It seemed like there was nothing for a pretty long time, and now there are a bunch of new bands that have everything in the right place.

**Rob:** Yeah, eh? I don't know what to say about that. We've always just done the same thing, under different names, I guess, but right now it just seems that everybody's on the road, making records, and it's music I like.

**Jeff:** We're getting noticed outside of Sudbury, too.

**Dave:** You seem to fit right in with bands





Interview by Dave Williams  
Photos by Scott Saville  
Layout by Uri Garcia

like The Tranzmitors who are suddenly everywhere, too.

**Rob:** I think that's the whole power pop craze that has been going on.

**Dave:** Ya, everyone's got a Plimsouls namedrop in their interviews these days.

**Rob:** Ha! It's true though!

**Jeff:** Rob jammed out "One Way Ticket" with Peter Case (Plimsouls frontman) last summer... Plimswhat? [laughs]

**Rob:** The Nerves, baby!

**Dave:** I'm not taking a shot at the Plimsouls by any means, but like you said, the power pop thing is huge right now.

**Rob:** I think it's dying out a little. The trends run as deep within the confines of punk rock as they do anywhere.

**Mitch:** I'm just glad that people can get down to a little rock'n'roll again. I don't know why they ever stopped.

**Rob:** It's fun!

**Dave:** I wouldn't necessarily lump Statues in with that stuff, anyway. There's a lot more going on lyrically than within your typical power pop fare. Rob, do you handle most of the writing or is it a communal thing?

**Rob:** Lyrics, yes for sure. Music is always fleshed out at practice, the odd

time I bring in something finished, but Jeff and Mitch need to add their touches to make it go right.

**Dave:** Your lyrics are definitely more thematic, I find. A lot more, I don't know, "cerebral" than a lot of the bands you're compared to.

**Jeff:** I agree.

**Mitch:** Yeah, there's way less "baby, baby."

**Rob:** I can't write like that. It feels ooky.

**Dave:** For that reason, I certainly try to avoid the obvious comparisons when relentlessly pushing your records on people. [laughs]

**Mitch:** Although, The Buzzcocks are the masters of the love song.

**Rob:** Fucking right. I wish I could make love songs sound that cool.

**Mitch:** It just wouldn't feel right to be singing about girls and getting laid. I would feel pretty cheesy singing about things like that.

**Rob:** Yeah, me too.

**Dave:** Your lyrics are definitely a lot more bleak-yet-hopeful than that kind of stuff.

**Jeff:** Office punk. [laughs]

**Dave:** Exactly.

**Mitch:** Yeah, the lyrics are mostly about

office politics and knowing your role in the work place.

**Dave:** Is that a product of being somewhat older in a traditionally young music community, do you think?

**Rob:** Totally, and working for a living, just getting old. I feel like I see things a little more clearly as I get old, so I turn 'em into songs.

**Dave:** Without even a hint of ass-kissing, I think I was in the perfect place for *New People*... because it absolutely floored me. I was actually kinda bummed about how dead-on a lot of it was.

**Rob:** Oh yeah? Thanks...and that's too bad.

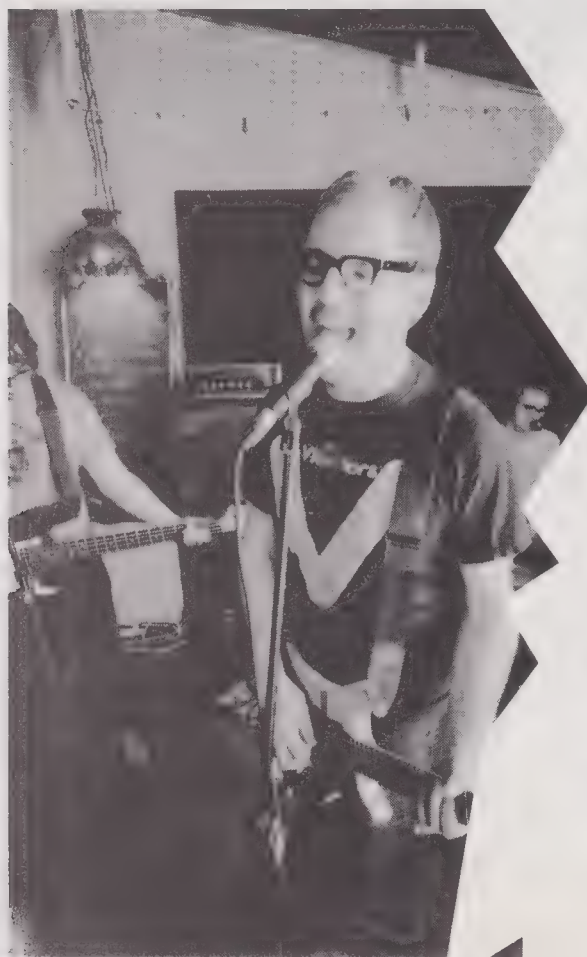
**Mitch:** Sorry for bumming you out dude. [laughs]

**Dave:** Not actually bummed, but the sentiment is just really perfect. I think it would hit home for a lot of people who are getting older in a "youth-oriented" community.

**Rob:** Half the fun for me, and I think for Jeff and Mitch too, is being able to recognize some of that shit and just be able to say "not for me." Am I speaking out of turn, dudes?

**Mitch:** Yeah, I don't know what you're saying there. [laughs]





**Jeff:** Carry on.

**Rob:** They're just words.

**Mitch:** Wow.

**Dave:** They're just words maybe, but they're noticeably more effective than a lot of others is all I'm saying. Being able to deliver something thoughtful and sincere in a fun, catchy way isn't the easiest thing in the world. It's definitely a rarity.

**Rob:** Thanks man, I'm happy with them.

**Dave:** Has being from small-town Canada had any specific impact on Statues as a band?

**Rob:** I don't think where you are located matters anymore, not with the internet.

**Dave:** I guess that's a good point. I'll put it this way: are you guys more a product of the Pointed Sticks pop punk era or the D.B.S. pop punk era? [laughs]

**Rob:** Wasn't the first Havocs show playing with D.B.S.?

**Jeff:** First all-ages show, yes. D.B.S., The Sweaters, Easter Dogs, The Havocs.

**Mitch:** I don't think that being located in a small center even really matters

even a nugget of Smugglers-related knowledge... not that I'm that kind of snob; I don't know.

**Rob:** Yeah, it's not like elitist shit.

**Mitch:** Live I thought The Tranzmitors lived up to their hype.

**Rob:** Fuck yes, they were amazing. I love their record and their singles.

**Jeff:** It was the next best thing to a Smugglers show. [laughs]

**Rob:** We got to play with them and watch them turn a bunch of hardcore kids into dance fans.

**Dave:** So what do you guys do when you're not with Statues or The Havocs?

**Jeff:** Work.

**Rob:** I work at a hospital and try my hand at raising kids. We are *so* not tough. [laughs]

**Dave:** That wasn't you guys that people were head-walking to during the Fucked Up weekend in Toronto?

**Mitch:** Yeah, dude.

**Jeff:** Totally.

**Rob:** A dude broke his neck, it was crazy.

**"I work at a hospital and  
try my hand at raising kids.  
We are so  
not tough"**

anymore either. Being in a punk band in Canada is probably like being in a punk band anywhere else. Our music is accessible to most people, but it's still a fringe type market.

**Dave:** I definitely recall having my mind completely blown when I found out that The Smugglers were Canadian and were as popular as I incorrectly believed they were. But I guess you're right, the internet has kinda leveled the playing field in terms of ease of exposure.

**Rob:** I still tend to look upon any popular band with a sense of unease. It's never the band's fault, but hype is ridiculous—and The Smugglers rule.

**Mitch:** I fucking love The Smugglers, but they're so unknown.

**Dave:** Yeah, I was so pumped about The Tranzmitors being ex-Smugglers and was secretly annoyed when everyone I knew was suddenly talking about them without

**Mitch:** We be bringing da crucial mosh. [laughs]

**Dave:** It's pretty awesome how eclectic punk rock bills are now, though.

**Mitch:** I think it's great.

**Rob:** I kind of love that; I'm not bored when I see a show.

**Mitch:** Better than watching the same band four times in a row.

**Dave:** Even Deranged putting out your 7" and the Violent Minds stuff, in the same ads, and it making perfect sense is great. It seems like you guys have a pile of records coming out in the next little while.

**Jeff:** We do.

**Dave:** That's a label whose name certainly has some pull as of late. Gordon is a pretty consistent judge of quality.

**Rob:** I like a lot of the records he does, for sure, and he's been super positive





with us, not that a guy is gonna be a dick and put out your record. I was actually really surprised when Gord contacted us.

**Mitch:** It's a very strange feeling when someone actually likes your music, and wants to put time, effort, and money into it.

**Rob:** Totally.

**Mitch:** It blows my mind that there's these dudes in Germany with Statues records.

**Rob:** It's fucking weird, but I'm pretty happy that people like some of our records and it's kind of a dream come true for me to be able to do these things we're doing, even this interview.

**Mitch:** Especially because we're not really doing this music thing to "make it." We probably could get a manager and an agent and all that shit, but that would be so shitty.

**Rob:** I think so too, because once you get there and it tanks, then what? It's not being pessimistic, just realistic.

**Dave:** So are you guys in a pile of other bands, too? At the Havocs show, the singer said something about you being the rhythm section in every band in Sudbury.

**Jeff:** Me and Mitch play together in The Havocs and we're also in a band called Varge!

**Rob:** We should talk about how grateful we are to Radio 81, Pelado, P.Trash, D e r a n g e d , Plastic Idol, and FDH. We have been able to out stuff out on all of these labels without having to do anything.

**Dave:** You've spread your releases across a handful of labels. How'd all of that go down?

**Rob:** Jeff was contacted by Simon from Radio 81 when he first fired up the label and he agreed to do a 12" for us and we were fucking stoked.

**Jeff:** We were even more stoked when he sold every last one of them in no time!

**Rob:** He'd also done a distro for a long time which

is how he knew Peter and Susanne from P.Trash.

**Dave:** It's cool that P.Trash is like this dirty garage label with a weirdo dirty garage following, but somehow you fit in there, too.

**Rob:** I was always kind of waiting for an email saying "Sorry boys," but instead it's like "When can we repress these things?" or "What else do you have to come out?" So P.Trash has just done a vinyl version of our first record *Aux*. I'm kind of waiting for the backlash on that one

**Dave:** Ya, the new *Aux* looks slick!

**Rob:** You don't even know. Our friend Matt does 99% of our artwork and he's amazing. Always knows exactly what we want and always does better than we could expect.

**Dave:** The production on the *New People...12"* is also incredible. Did you record it in Sudbury?

**Mitch:** Yes at Easter Island Studios, here in town.

**Dave:** And the *Same Bodies...7"*?

**Mitch:** Yup.

**Rob:** Everything we do comes out of there.

**Mitch:** The *Are Go! 7"* wasn't.

**Jeff:** That was done in the "hair metal factory."

**Mitch:** A recording house in Toronto where we got free recording time at this really weird '80s rock studio.

**Dave:** That sounds amazing.

**Mitch:** Pictures of the best dudes on the wall.

**Jeff:** Rockin' the sweetest mulls.

**Rob:** Remember? They were big in Japan?

**Mitch:** Shit that's only still cool in Japan.

**Dave:** Tell me what long-term goals you've got and stuff.

**Rob:** I don't think we have any long term goals; we're just really short sighted.

**Jeff:** We'd like to tour the west coast of the States, Japan. You know, get around.

**Rob:** Well, yeah, there is that. Make more records, play more shows...

**Jeff:** We toured around the east coast a few times and around Ontario a little.

**Mitch:** I just want to travel around with my bros and play music in places I've never been. Meet awesome people and make friends everywhere.

**Rob:** Be weekend warriors when we can and do some longer touring when I feel I've earned enough good guy time at home.

[www.statues.ca](http://www.statues.ca)

SAME BODIES

SAME FACES

STATUES



# TOP FIVE'S

## RAZORCAKE STAFF

### Adrian Salas

*Five Bands (I Actually Listen To) With the Obscurest/Vaguest Lyrics*

5. Rudimentary Peni—The aural equivalent to schizophrenia.
4. Germs—What's a lexicon devil exactly?
3. Nirvana
2. Minutemen—They never sound pretentious though, and also have some of the bluntest lyrics ever (often in the space of an EP).
1. Cap'n Jazz—Reading the lyric sheet actually made me feel like I knew even less what they're singing about.

### Amy Adeyrie

*Top 5 Songs That've Got Me Pining for Someone on the Other Side of the Planet*

- "Space & Time"—Miss Alex White & The Red Orchestra
- "Mean Streak"—American Steel
- "Not a Substitute"—Jay Reatard
- "Captain Badass"—Songs: Ohia
- "The Temptation of Adam"—Josh Ritter

### Aphid Peewit

- Out With A Bang, *Love My Life 7"*
- Regulations, *Different Needs EP 7"*
- Crispin Hellion Glover, *What Is It? (movie)*
- MDC live at First Avenue
- Dead Boys, *Return of the Living Dead Boys (DVD)*

### Art Elmaguer

*Top Five Recent Retro Reissues*

- Mission of Burma, *Signals, Calls and Marches: The Definitive Edition LP / DVD*
- Mission of Burma, *Vs.: The Definitive Edition LP / DVD*
- Flipper, *Live 1980-1981 DVD*
- Anti-Nowhere League, *A Punk Rock Anthology 2 x CD*
- Iron Cross, *Bootleg LP*

### Ben Snakepit

1. Small Pool, *4-Way Split Series Volume 1, LP*
2. Razorcake podcasts! 'bout time!
3. Starcleaner Records party, 3/12/08
4. My sweet Let's Pretend Records hoodie.
5. Woody Guthrie, *This Machine Kills Fascists DVD*

### Buttertooth

1. Battles, *Mirrored CD*
2. Maserati, free sounds off the internet!
3. The Dumps, Extinct Animals, The Verso live at O'Connells Pub 3/18/08! A rocking show!
4. Pedro the Lion, *Achilles Heel CD* (older but mellow and spacey!)
5. Les Savy Fav, *Let's Stay Friends CD*

### Chris Peigler

- Legal Weapon 2002 CD-R (The old L.A. band's final album which got very limited release in '02. I finally got a copy from Legal Weapon archivist Karl Wentzel at [www.pacificwebjournal.net](http://www.pacificwebjournal.net))
- Young Livers, *The New Drop Era LP*
- Carnal Knowledge, Self-titled, self-released cassette
- Rekless Youth, *Open Your Eyes CD*
- Brain Handle, Self-titled 12"

### Chris Pepus

- Al Giordano and Tracy Russo's election blog, *The Field*, at [ruralvotes.com](http://ruralvotes.com)
- Ishmael Reed's articles about the Clintons at *Counterpunch* ([www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org))
- *Chicago 10* (film)
- "Vote Machine: How Republicans Hacked the Justice Department," article by Scott Horton in *Harper's* magazine
- Democracy Now! reports on the Iraq War ([www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org))

### Christine Koutsotis

*Top 5 Brain-Melters*

1. A midget in stilts, wearing a 1920's flapper dress.

2. Tom Waits, *Nighthawks at the Diner CD*. Too nuts for words.
3. Fugazi, *End Hits CD*. Sublimely awesome.
4. The fan reaction to the DC Comics versus Siegel case over Superman.
5. Pissed Jeans, *Hope for Men CD*. More people need this.

### Craven Rock

*(Counting Down to 1)*

5. Panthro U.K United 13, *Sound of a Gun LP*
4. Kieran Kane, Kevin Leach and Fats Joplin, *Lost John Dean CD*
3. Radon, *Metric Buttlords of Rock LP*
2. (tie) Allergic To Bullshit, *You and Me This Is What We're for and This Is What We'll Get and Allergic To Bullshit, Train I Ride 7"*
1. New Model Army and Stromkern at DNA Lounge in San Francisco

### Cristy C. Road

*Top 5 Songs to Have Killer Orgasms to*

1. Tilt, "Libel"
2. Leatherface, "Laughing Melancholia"
3. M Blanket, "Even the Score"
4. Born Against, "Poland"
5. Team Dresch, "She's Crushing My Mind"

### Daryl Gussin

- Shang-A-Lang, *Summertime 7"*
- Young Offenders 7"
- Needles 7"
- Bad Reaction, *Dare to Be Dull 7"*
- Razorcake Podcasts

### Dave Disorder

*Five Things That Didn't Suck About SXSW '08*

1. Monotonix
2. Tamale House
3. Skate ramp show with ADD/C, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Vena Cava, and others (too drunk to play, too drunk to remember)
4. River party with PBT and the Daves crew. Collard green burritos!
5. Peeber (Snakepit's dog) (Honorable mentions to Texas Busch, suction cup crossbow from the dollar store, somebody yelling, "Fuck you hippie," to Keith Morris, and Buckys)

### Dave Williams

1. The Creeps, *Lakeside Cabin CD* (and CD release party!)

### Designated Dull

*Top 5 Worst Metal Bands, Based on Their Haircuts Alone (There Are So Fuckin' Many More Than These 5)*

- Krokus (C'mon man, their singer looked like a switchblade-carrying Jersey broad from the '70s, giving all women from said period a bad name.)
- Accept (Attn. frontman: can you say Corky, ala TV's *Life Goes On*?)
- Grim Reaper (Never recognized as real metal being that the real deal black metal bands laughed in their direction, but I had to include Grim Reaper solely on the fact that their singer looked like Meatloaf in drag with scraggly-ass teeth).
- Raven (Although their drummer's hair doesn't really constitute a place on this list, his wearing of a field hockey helmet with face mask onstage definitely earns a spot. Oh, and his name is "Wacko." Give me a fucking break).
- Twisted Sister (Not only was the lead singer's hair reminiscent of Bette Midler's frizzed-out 'do in the movie *The Rose*, but it's even more than ridiculous now. Trust me.)

### Disaffected

- My photo exhibit show with Fy Fan, Annihilation Time, and others.
- Assassimators, *Sigt Efter Hjertet CD*
- Good Riddance, *Remain in Memory CD*
- Various Artists, *El Libertario CD*
- Dystopia, Self-titled LP

### Jennifer Federico

*Top 5 Reminders That the World Is Not a Total Disaster*

1. Leslie and the Lys (live show)
2. Vanilla soy ice cream with chunky peanut butter mixed in
3. Great tailed grackles talking up a storm in Austin
4. *I Like You: Hospitality under the Influence* by Amy Sedaris (book)
5. The Monarch (from The Venture Bros. cartoon)

### Joey Maroney

1. Wreckless Eric, "Whole Wide World"
2. The Police, "So Lonely"

Somebody yelling,  
"Fuck you hippie," to Keith Morris.



3. Elvis Costello & The Attractions, "(What's so Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding"

4. Eddie Murphy: *Delirious*, DVD. Priceless stand-up, but brace yourself. It's from 1983 and he's wearing skin-tight red leather.

5. Watching the U.S. Bombs live at Safari Sam's (in Hollywood on 2/24/08) particularly because during the last song in the midst of a drunken stupor, Duane Peters threw the microphone across the stage and accidentally hit guitarist, Kerry Martinez, in the forehead, made him bleed, and he almost fell over from the impact and shock. As mean as it sounds, it was one of the funniest thing I've seen. Every time I think about it I laugh.

#### Jimmy Alvarado

*The Faboo Five* (no particular order)

- The huge robot balloon Karla got me for my birthday/Valentine's Day: Have pictures of me 'n' him watching TV together. Seriously.
- *Phantom Sightings* at LACMA: Great show, but shameful it's LACMA's first major Chicano art exhibit in twenty-one years.
- *Ken Can Cook* compilation CD: The Project Blowed hip-hop crowd serve up yet another crucial release.
- Peaweese, *Walking the Walk* CD: Fine punk rock, emphasis on rock, from Italy.
- Razorcake podcastin', baybee!

#### Joe Evans III

- The Copyrights, *Learn the Hard Way* CD
- The Sidekicks, *So Long, Soggy Dog* CDEP
- Tin Armor, Everything about them as a band.
- Battletorn, *Terminal Dawn* CD
- Red Phone Dispatch, *Rotary Public* CDEP

#### Josh Benke

- Stickerguy 15 Year Anniversary Bash w/ Scared of Chaka, The Gain, The Spits, The Bananas, The Rippers. Holy fuck, what a party!
- Black and Whites LP
- Mayyors 7"
- Jay Reatard, *See/Saw 7"*
- Sister Rosetta Tharpe on youtube.

#### Keith Rosson

- Playing shows with Pteradon, Maladie, Turkish Techno, I Sing The Body Electric, and Shinobu on our little Neckties tour

- Subwaste/Tommy Gustaffson & The Idiots, split CD
- *Manhattan Nocturne* by Colin Harrison (novel)
- *God Clobbers Us All* by Poe Ballantine (novel)
- *Controlled Burn* by Scott Wolven (short stories)

#### Kiyoshi Nakazawa

- Balls Out group art show at Grass Hut Gallery Portland. March 7, 08
- Rock n' Roll Fantasy art show (Martin Ontiveros and friends) at Grass Hut Gallery Portland February 1, 08.
- Greasers, Ghouls, and Gals art show at Melt Gallery Los Angeles March 8, 08
- Saul Williams and Dragons of Zynth at the Troubadour, Los Angeles. March 25, 08.
- Renfield at Safari Sam's, Los Angeles. March 19, 08.

#### Kurt Morris

1. My new nephew, Samuel
2. Dead To Fall, *Are You Serious?*
3. Red Animal War (everything)
4. *Welcome to Flavor Country* #14 (zine)
5. *Keep Loving Keep Fighting* #7/I Hate This Part of Texas #7 (split zine)

#### Lauren Trott

- Tinyfolk, *Platapeasawallaland*
- checkshakes.com
- *Avow* #22
- clove cigarettes
- Defiance, Ohio, *The Fear, The Fear, The Fear*

#### The Lord Kvejdulf

*Five Best People in Carolina So Far*

- Higbee (Swimming with the sharks and wanting to punch them in the nose! Happy uppercuts!)
- The Fornesinator (Why are you from Buffalo and not Green Bay?)
- Anofrio (She's from Minnesota, but she's got a lot of good qualities as well...)
- Jimmy (Dictionaries are go!)
- Coleman (A name synonymous with good camping!)

#### Meque Pants

*Top 5 Reasons Spring Is Way Radder Than Winter*

1. Not wanting to die most days.
2. Planning roadtrips and vacations.
3. Short pants and skirts.
4. Daily adventures.
5. An average of three decent shows a week.

#### Maddy Tight Pants

*Top Five Most Ridiculous Cereals of All Time!*  
(Note: I am NOT making this up!)

1. C-3PO's (Star Wars is go!)
2. Donkey Kong Crunch
3. Homer's Cinnamon Donuts
4. Nintendo Cereal System
5. Urkel-Os

#### Mike Frame

- Black Crowes, *Warpaint* CD
- Figures Of Light, *It's Lane 7"*
- Funeral Shock, *III 7"*
- Lemuria, *Get Better LP*
- Tim Armstrong, *Poet's Life* CD

#### Mitch Clem

*Since Razorcake Is an LA-Based Zine, Here Are My Top Five Current Favorite LA-Based Stand-Up Comedians*

1. Maria Bamford
2. Paul F Tompkins
3. Jimmy Pardo
4. Zach Galifinakis
5. Andy Kindler

#### MP Johnson

*5 Things I Like*

- *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* (2002 series on DVD)
- M.O.D., *Surfin' M.O.D.* CD
- Today Is The Day, *Axis of Eden* CD
- Taylor Dayne, *Satisfied* CD
- Sick Of It All, Everything they do.

1. The Forgotten, *The Forgotten* CD
2. Cursed, *Three* CD
3. The Okmoniks, *Party Fever!!!* CD
4. Zero Down, *Good Times at the Gates of Hell* CD
5. The Heavy Hearts, *A Killer of Snakes* CD

#### Nardwaa! The Human Serviette

1. Nihilist Spasm Band, *Live @ The Western Front* CD
2. The Whitsundays, *The Whitsundays* CD
3. Chad Allan and The Reflections, *Early Roots* CD
4. Final Verdict, *Reaching for Something Better* CD
5. Destroyer, *Trouble in Dreams* 2 x LP

#### Nick Toerner

- The Brokedowns, *New Brains for Everyone*
- Mass Beer, *The young, the Filthy...*
- The Serious Geniuses/Jean Claude Jam Band, split 7"
- The Dopamines, Self-titled
- Little Kings Cream Ale (Beer. The cases are perfect for storing 7"s)

#### Rhythm Chicken

*Top 5 Animals in Europe This Last Month*

- The cats of Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- The goats of Kostenetz, Bulgaria
- The chickens of Wustenhain, Germany
- The Wiewiorczaki of Plock, Poland

- The wolperdinger, parts unknown, Germany

*Top 5 Bands I am Looking Forward to Seeing at Insubordination Fest 2008*

1. Sludgeworth
2. Agent Orange
3. The Riptides
4. The Ergs!
5. The Queers

1. Jonah Christopher Parkhill, March 28, 2008 1:27 AM, 7 pounds, 1 oz. (baby)
2. Rock Band (game)
3. The Lathe Symphonic, *The Tavern EP* (EP)
4. Mike Doughty, *Busking* (Also an EP)
5. The Slow Poisoner's Miracle Tonic (panacea)

- We March, *Creator/Destructor* CD
- Young Offenders, Self-titled 7"
- Hex Dispensers, *Lose My Cool 7"*
- Statues, *Same Bodies, Same Faces 7"*
- The Estranged (both Black Water and Dirtnap 7"s)
- Shang-A-Lang, *Summertime 7"*

#### Top Five "B" Bands

1. Big Boys
2. Bad Brains
3. Black Flag
4. Butthole Surfers
5. Blundermen

*Top 5 Coolest Things about Seeing Trouble Live at the Jigsaw*

1. Eric Wagner trying to toke someone's "joint" and having the cherry fall out, then telling them "It's out! It's out!" and finishing the lyrics to a song.
2. They asked if there were any requests. I screamed for "The Wolf." They played it for about ten seconds and claimed they didn't know it. (!!!)
3. Stage left guitar tech walking behind amps and unplugging them during a song.
4. Bruce Franklin's FUCKING GUITAR TONE
5. Mr. White!

Kung Fu USA, *Neversign* CD  
50 Million, *Broad Side of a Barn and Shit on a Single* CD  
Period Three, Self-titled 7"  
Nar, 41-song collection CD-R  
Visiting Dave in Portland



## 2,000 DIRTY SQUATTERS:

**K-137 Live Music: LP**

Would anyone be surprised that a band called 2,000 Dirty Squatters would be a U.K. peace punk band? Very much what you would expect of a band with this name; this is exactly what a gutter punk would want. It adheres to the style perfectly and never varies. Fans will love it. —Mike Frame (Scrap)

## 26 BEERS: Self-titled: CD

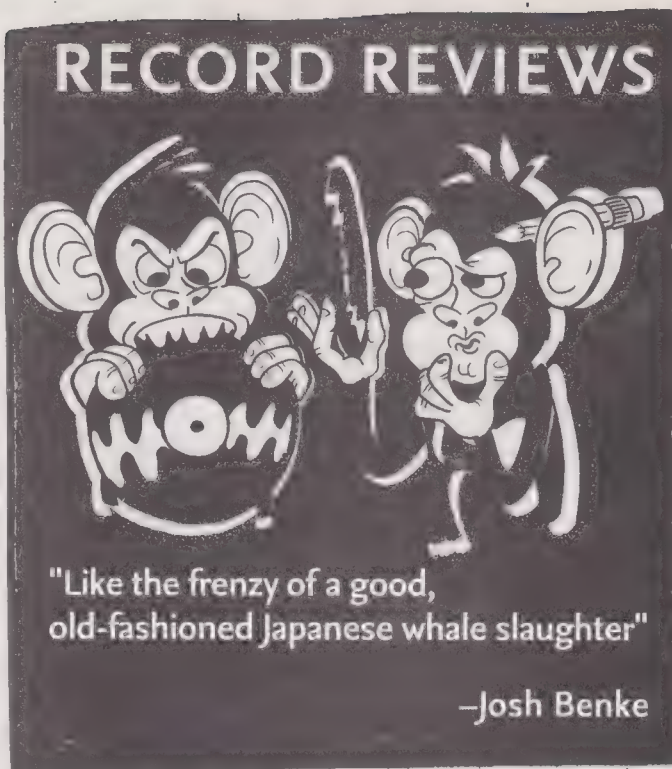
Tightly wound riffs of death and screaming crust-metal-something-core. I'm not the best judge of music like this because I find it aggravating and aurally assaulting, which is most likely the point. So, good job? —Jessica T (Rodent Popsicle)

## 50 MILLION: Broad Side of a Barn and Shit on a Single: CD

This is the type of album, err, retrospective (of sorts) that makes me hate myself for doing whatever it was that I was doing to miss this when it first came out. This is a CD—compiling an EP, some singles, comp tracks, unreleased stuff, and a recording done with Hickey called *Hickey Million* all spanning the late nineties—and this disc came out in 2005. The tracks on here, up until the Hickey stuff, sounds like what might've happened if Steve Albini or Thurston Moore tried to produce a Sebadoh album. Still, 50 Million totally makes it their own. They go from acoustic bits to hectic indie noise to small doses of dingy, poppy punk. (If it helps, Shell of Shellshag is in the band, and Jen is included under "Other performers.") The *Hickey Million* recording is awesome. It has the swirls of a cassette that has been listened to beyond its expected life span, giving it a sense of familiarity and down home goodness. Take that and add a tiny hint of indie (à la above-mentioned) to Hickey, and there you have it. Also, the two bands made an outrageously fantastic cover of Billy Bragg's "A New England" together. —Vincent (Starcleaner, www.starcleaner.com)

## ABLE BAKER FOX: Voices: CD

So this is the new Small Brown Bike/Casket Lottery band, huh? Well, that's pretty much exactly what it sounds like. Take *The River Bed*, add some Casket Lottery mellowness, toss in some Fire Theft-esque "progressive" songwriting and rhythm section lock-up and you'll have the idea. Don't get me wrong, this record is killer, it's just not particularly surprising. It's almost what would've been the next logical step for Small Brown Bike with a bit of quirkiness thrown in the mix. I can't imagine any of the Bike's rabid



fans being disappointed, that's for sure. Glad you're back, lads. —Dave Williams (Second Nature)

## ACTION ANDY: Sings Haunted Honky Tonk & Other Cryptic Tales of Life, Love and Woe: LP

Fourteen excellent, saloon-fueled honky tonk and crackling western tracks with a purposefully primitive roots, rock'n'roll, and spookshow bent. Best enjoyed in rum rooms and fleshpots, where reckless abandon and rawness roam unhampered. Completely appreciated, fresh and new, yet reminiscent of bands like the Readymen, Embers, and The Runabouts, and newer incarnations like the Flat Duo Jets. —Jessica T (Relampago-go)

## ACURSED: Tunneln I Ljusets Slut: CD

This is some great d-beat from Sweden. I don't really listen to a lot of crust/d-beat because it usually gets really boring after the initial energy rush of the first song (I'm looking at you, Discharge's *Never Again*), but this gets it right. Like Tragedy, these guys know how to throw in just a little bit of a frantic or desperate-feeling melodic edge to keep the 1,000 mile-per-hour drums and bloody murder screams fresh. There's actually some damn sweet dynamics with the guitar

playing. Gasp, there's even some acoustic strumming on here! I also like how the bass has that distorted but not inaudible tone that I love so. There are several spoken interludes thrown in, but since there's no lyric sheet and everything is in Swedish anyway, I have no idea what they're talking about. I'd like to assume that some of the topics that are being covered in the interludes and songs include filing tax returns, dealing with post office clerks, and running out of toilet paper while on the can. This isn't happy music by any means, but it ranks near the top of my list of music to usher in the apocalypse with. —Adrian (Prank)

## AGAINST EMPIRE:

### *Destructive Systems Collapse: 7"*

A band that I have kept track of now for a few years. Starting with their first release, a split 7" with Holokaust, followed by their LP *The One Who Bear the Scars Remember*. They did another split after that I have yet to pick up with Iskra from Canada. I have also seen the band live through the years, so it is great to see firsthand this Los Angeles crust band grow and develop. On their latest release, a two-songer, they focus more on the music instead of just blasting it out. With songs in the four to five minute range, the band is showing more cohesion and displaying

greater musicianship. That doesn't mean this band is getting soft. They continue to play metallic crust that charges forward like a pack of bulls on a rampage. You get the drive to rock out to, hearing the chunky guitars force their way out the speakers. Growled, guttural, yelled vocals ensure that nothing pretty is going on. Drumming that is tight and pounded out with force. On this recording, I like how the bass was recorded: punchy and bright while still bringing forth the bottom end. If bands like Hellshock, Bolt Thrower, or Amebix fit your musical palate, I would believe this band would slide right into your tastes. —Donofthead (Threat To Existence)

## AL BURIAN: III Eagle Live at the White House: 7"

Al Burian (of Milemarker and various punk zines) recorded this tortured, bizarre record live in D.C. at the start of the current Iraq War. He heckles his audience as he plays noisy, weird covers and tries to talk to the crowd about politics. This is a very unique record, but hardly anyone without multiple Axis I mental health diagnoses will want to listen to it more than once. —Art Ettinger (Hello Asshole)

## APATIA: Uleglasc: CD

Melodic hardcore from this band from Poland. Fifteen tunes that sound similar enough all the way through. Not bad. Fans of Strike Anywhere, early Strung Out, or other lead guitar-oriented melodic HC will find a lot to like here. —Mike Frame (Trujaca Fala)

## APE CITY R&B: Firestarter: 7"

The gas can and cheesy orange flames on the cover of the Ape City R&B 7" aren't nearly foreboding enough for the scorching garage blues contained on the wax. "Firestarter" has a guitar lick nastier than the ones your girlfriend gives you "back there" when passions explode in the heat of the moment, and the drums gallop along loosely, a thumping invitation to shake the stiffness from your hips and move. The lyrics are as menacing as Big Black's "Kerosene" and delivered with an abject snotty vitriol generally reserved for the face of someone into which you are about to spit. "Wot I Say" could be a variation of the A-side with rapid-fire drum fills and similarly executed guitar leads. I put this in league with the Golden Boys stellar "Whiskey Before Sleep" from a couple years ago. Their Slovenly single was pretty great, but Ape City R&B shows us their next level shit on this release. —Josh Benke (La-Ti-Da)

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Interesting. Played this thing on the computer and while the lyrics match up to the lyric sheet they included, the band on the CD-R is listed as The Dogs D'Amour, not Aury'n. And the Aury'n song titles—menacing ones like “The Untamed Sun” and “The Reward of Oblivion” on the lyric sheet—are totally wimpified by the fact that the computer lists them as “Pretty Pretty Once” and “How Come It Never Rains.” I don’t get it at all. Anyway, as far as the actual *music*, we’re looking at some late ‘90s screamo stuff with strained vocals and a very slight metal tinge, though much better than I make it out to be. Think, you know, Ebullition Records in its heyday, skinny dudes in hemp necklaces screaming while they roll around on the floor, grainy woodcuts from the 1800s used as a band’s visuals, etc. Definitely takes one back (which is a good or bad thing, depending on how you look at it) and reminds me more than a bit of bands like End On End, Staircase, that first Shivering full-length. The band/song title discrepancy was a little weird, but if I’d just put the shit in a CD player like a normal person, I’d have been none the wiser. My tastes may have changed over the years, but there’s no arguing with the fact that bands of this ilk are capable of sounding pretty goddamn powerful, and Aury’n’s a tight band who sounds like they know exactly what they’re doing. —Keith Rossion (Aury’n)

Primal, bluesy, lo-fi rock'n'roll stuff that doesn't bother much with the pretense of pretentiousness. —Jimmy Alvarado (Backdoor Stan)

Straight-ahead early-'80s style hardcore that owes quite a bit to Uniform Choice, The Circle Jerks, and The Zero Boys (in the guitar). Thankfully, it doesn't come across as history being listlessly recited, paragraph by drool-mouthed paragraph. The energy's high, the lyrics are current-day topical, the songs are ultra-tight and catchy, and they play their instruments well (but not too well; they know when to put the kibosh on a potential solo). There are little indicators sprinkled throughout these four songs that they listen to much more than hardcore—that hardcore just happens to be their weapon of choice—and that's always a blessing. —Todd (Blind Spot)

Two piece metal that's still brutal in light of being a little stripped down. Reminds me of the kind of stuff you usually hear at ABC No Rio these days—way “crunchy” and growly vocals. Another plus is that there're twenty-two songs in about seventeen minutes, so it's hard to get tired of it. —Joe Evans III (Mad At The World)

Hair brained punk music theory #428:

What's the word for "stereotype" that's positive? Oh yeah. Stereotype. The Midwest's crappy winter has helped American punk rock through some lean times. Away from the constant diversions of the East Coast (despite the weather) and away from California, where one can pretty much survive in flip flops and shorts except for a couple of days a year, Midwesterners have a good four to five months to hole up, hide out, work on songs, listen to records, shovel snow, and watch things rust (from cars to brains). So, for those on the coasts who look at the Midwest as constantly lagging culturally, the reality is the Midwest is strong like bear and just doesn't give in to constant whimsy. Bear Proof Suit recently found punk, circa 1980-1982 (in its entirety, nationwide) a couple years back and are currently kicking its ass into a pulp, like every day is Groundhog Day, and damn, it sounds great. —Todd (Repulsion)

I'm going to cut to the chase. I don't even know if I can disgrace any cereal by comparing it to this band. The very act of cereal comparison implies a connection between the best food of all time and the band in question. I mean, even a disgusting cereal is still *cereal*! But this? I can't handle it! There shall be no comparison! The press release informs us that, "Better Luck Next Time has made their mark in the DIY scene, shooting them onto the Top 10 pop punk charts on MySpace.com daily." And

check this out from their website: "Hot Topic is now carrying Third Time's a Charm at select Southern California stores for an unbelievably low price of \$4.99! The more albums we can push out of those locations means the more other stores will pick it up!" Oh yeah, this sounds like, I dunno, Blink-182 or whatever sound brain cells make when they begin to die. —Maddy (World)

Picked it up 'cause the one-sheet claims they're influenced by My Bloody Valentine and the Beatles. That combination of influences apparently translates into lackluster alt-rock. Who knew? —Jimmy Alvarado (The Eskimo Record Label)

Forty years since the bone-shattering debut of *Vincebus Eruptum*? Hard to believe, but these guys are back with a new release. It rocks from start to finish. Heavy grooves, great guitars, and pounding drums. "Rollin' Dem Bones" and "Young Lions in Paradise" are my current faves. There's even a killer Albert King cover on here, too. Blue Cheer—they still play hard enough to "make cottage cheese out of the air." Gut, where are you? —Sean Kopenick (Rainman)

Not quite as over the top as previous

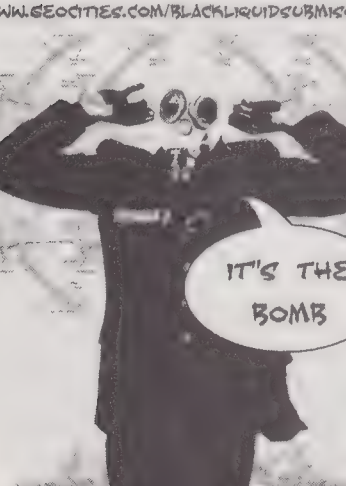
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releases, Boxcar Satan, this time along with the like-minded Ghostwriter, still manage to mine the odder, darker depths of swampy blues. Whether slogging brooding originals or making covers like Bob Dylan's "Serve Somebody" and Woody Guthrie's "Jesus Christ" sound like they popped outta their own twisted noggins, they manage to evoke the memory of Scratch Acid as vividly as Son House. If you ever thought early Gun Club stuff could've used a bit more psychosis in their delivery, this'll no doubt do the trick for ye. —Jimmy Alvarado (End Of The West)

#### **BREAKS, THE: ...Are Broke: one-sided 7"EP**

The format's curious. A five-song, one-sided EP that goes at 33. Perhaps it's a money-saving enterprise because the band had already broken up or they wanted to laugh at all the suckers who drop the needle on the blank side? The Breaks were a straight-ahead St. Louis (they're very no-coast proud) hardcore band in the 1981 (coasts), 1983 (Midwest) sense of the word. The good news is the bad news: tight, powerful, heartfelt music that was close to twenty years old when The Breaks were around. I believe that they believe what they believe; it's just that the musical mold they chose had already been cast and hardened. The Breaks pour right into what Minor Threat and Youth Of Today had already formed and settled right into that shape. You know exactly what the music's gonna look like. The band broke up in 2006. —Todd (Firestarter)

#### **BRUISES, THE: Connected: CD**

Two old clichés come immediately to mind with this disc; one is wrong and one is right. The first is that you cannot judge a book by its cover. I expected this to sound like Tegan and Sara and that is exactly what I got. The cover summed it up perfectly. The second is if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it is a duck. This looks and sounds just like a Tegan and Sara record; the songwriting is not as strong but it is not bad overall. —Mike Frame (Self-released)

#### **BRUTAL KNIGHTS: Living By Yourself: 12"**

Asuperquick one from this knucklehead bunch of punk misfits from Toronto. Ten songs of short and sweet trashiness fly by in twelve minutes. This time around, the production is more raw and sounds self-recorded. It adds an element of *Nervous Breakdown* Black Flag meets the Nihilistics. A good thing in my book. They come across more like their live show. I have actually seen them a couple of times and they are especially great on their home turf. I know when I think of bands from Toronto, I think of this band in the same breath as Fucked Up and Career Suicide. I have heard that there is a European tour version of this 12" as a picture disc 7" with fewer songs. If anyone wants to donate one to me, I would be forever grateful. —Donofthedeath (Deranged)

#### **CAESAR HOLIDAY, A: Self-titled: CD**

This is a mostly instrumental album of what the band describes as "an inspired

interpretation of post-rock and avant-garde." I'm not familiar with too much of anything that falls under that umbrella, so I can't really say it sucks, but I can say that this isn't my thing. Lots of melodies throughout this record, the songs are about five minutes each and follow a prog rock structure. Plenty of violin and complicated guitar work as well. I guess I could see using some of the songs with a less menacing vibe to them as white noise while trying to fall asleep, but otherwise this one will be collecting dust until I can get it off to the used record store. Give me The Copyrights any day. —Dave Dillon (Self-released)

#### **CATALYST, THE / BRAINWORMS: Split 7"**

The first Catalyst song, "Born with a Buzz," sounds like a robot trying to make itself throw up. The second song, "Dunna Nanunna," is a righteously fucked up bullet train blast of growling, screeching hardcore. The third song is an aimless instrumental that should have been left off the record, no matter how close the band is with the friend to whom they dedicate it. I'm not sure I'd listen to this side again, but fans of jaw-cracking hardcore might wanna pick it up. The Brainworms side starts off with an ode to Rites Of Spring called "Winnie Cooper." Not my cup of tea, nor is their second offering, "Art Thou Bored." Emotional hardcore that, unfortunately, is lost on these ears. —Josh Benke (Rorschach)

#### **CHINA LOCA: I Like How: CD**

Oh, man, you caught me again. Here I am, the editor of this zine, reviewing

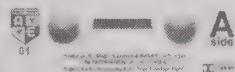
something that one of our contributors put out. Conflict of interest! I tell you what. When three other zines run a review, I'll retract this. You just send me the links. It's not like we have contributors to this here publication because we think they suck and they should be ignored. China Loca are: Amy Adoyzie, Imposing 'Stache Gus, and a warp speed Casiotone providing the drumbeats. Let's not gussy this up beyond what it is: Amy sing/screaming, Gus plonking through a practice amp, and a machine, but, damn, if the minimalism doesn't play in their favor in a Crass-meets-Bikini Kill-meets-cheap-beer-belly-basement way. There's anthems ("SOS"—"same old stuff" (roller rink mix)), there's ballads ("This Is All"), and there're straight-up rockers. Take your Warped Tour, cell phone excuses, and viral marketing. I'll take a band that had three months to exist, practiced in their pajamas, and DIY'd furiously any day. —Todd (China Loca, and if you have Razorcake #43, there's a link in Amy's column to download this album for free.)

#### **COLD ONES: Self-titled: 7"**

Cold Ones come from Liverpool with some hardcore punk, emphasizing the punk elements. Sometimes it gets a bit rockin'; sometimes it gets a bit cheesy. For the most part, they sing about drinking and being downtrodden. In case you didn't catch it, their name is a reference to beer. The closing tracks on both sides hit harder than the rest of them. Pretty good stuff. (The last track on the first side is my favorite on here.)

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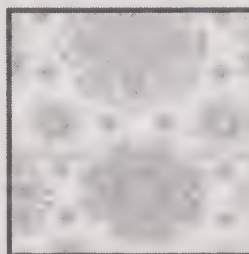
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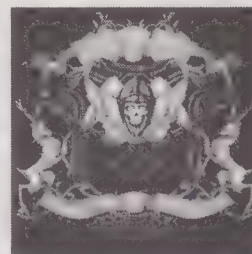
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The cheese is to be found smothering the opening track on the second side. It opens like some hair metal crap from the Sunset Strip twenty years ago, and it has lyrics to match (the title is "Cold Blooded Hot Lover," from which the lyrics don't stray too far). The opening track on the first side kinda threw me off, too. It has a skate-influenced street punk feel to it with lyrics à la Misfits (it's called "Evil Eye"). Kinda sounds like it could be on one of those Tony Hawk games. —Vincent (Ghost City)

#### CONGA FURY: *Chaotic Noise*: LP

Raging and blown-out thrash from this Japanese band. According to the insert, these songs were recorded in 2001. I wonder why they took so long to come out. Saw this band a couple years back and they were a fantastic live band. Very cool full color artwork makes this real cool to look at while the thrash spews out of your speakers. —Mike Frame (Six Weeks)

#### CONQUEST FOR DEATH:

##### *Front Row Tickets to Armageddon*: LP

I never got around to putting together my list of top ten albums of 2007, but I can tell you for a fact that, if I had, this sucker would have been on it. It's most of the dudes from What Happens Next? making the same sort of insanely fast hardcore. This is the stuff that makes you want to go so fast in the circle pit that you end up tripping on your own feet. Don't worry though, someone will pick you up. Just keep on going. Spend your ten bucks on this now. —MP Johnson (PBP)

#### CONVERSIONS, THE: *Prisoners' Inventions*: LP

Listening to *Prisoners' Inventions* is like watching a great movie for the second time—the characters and scenes are familiar, the plot doesn't go anywhere unexpected, but things that went unnoticed the first time around reveal themselves, and the subtle touches that went into making the film become apparent. At first listen, The Conversions aren't doing anything ground breaking with their brand of perfectly executed, arty post-hardcore, but just underneath the surface is a thoughtfulness and attention to song craft that isn't found in 99.9% of the hardcore bands releasing music today. The lyrics are satisfyingly vague (no self-righteous braggadocio here), the breakdowns are interesting and unique, and the singer's voice is high-pitched and ferocious. It reminds of a less rock'n'roll Aerobitch, a less balls-to-the-wall I.C.U., or a more musically accomplished East Bay Chasers. It's good. Really good. —Josh Benke (Level Plane)

#### COPYRIGHTS, THE:

##### *Learn the Hard Way*: CD

This is good, even very good, modern pop punk—like eight out of ten stars. I can't say exactly how *Learn the Hard Way* stacks up against the older Copyrights albums since this is the first one of their albums I've gotten to hear more than a couple tracks from, but this feels like a band that's mastered their craft. The main problem is that, at times, this album feels just a little too workman-like. Everything's pretty good, but only a few

of songs rise above the fray to approach greatness and be especially memorable (those songs being "Switchblades," "Out of Ideas," and "On the Way Out"). This is worth picking up, but seeing as my benchmark for contemporary pop punk is The Methadones *Not Economically Viable* and The Ergs! *Upstairs/Downstairs*, there is a lot to live up to since every song on those albums is nearly perfect and full of those moments which make me glad to be alive, even if I'm feeling miserable. *Learn the Hard Way* is good, but it needs a few more of those all transcending moments to be great. —Adrian (Red Scare)

#### COPYRIGHTS, THE:

##### *Learn the Hard Way*: CD

While I initially thought that a new record from these fellas was perhaps a little too hot-on-the-heels of last year's *Make Sound*, it really only took one listen to dispel any uncertainties or preconceptions. I can easily say that this is The Copyrights' best release to date and I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that each record sheds more obvious influences than the one before it. Granted, there's still an unshakeable sense of Illinois in this record, but it's significantly less obvious. The choruses are bigger, the lyrics are cleverer, and it's immediately more memorable than their previous albums, which I also loved. I'm totally blown away. —Dave Williams (Red Scare, [www.redscare.net](http://www.redscare.net))

#### CREEPS, THE: *Lakeside Cabin*: CD

There's something somewhat

bittersweet about stumbling upon a long-running local band and immediately falling in love. Sure, it's terrific that now there's this killer band from your hometown that you'll probably get to see all the time and you can hang out with at your dingy local bar and talk to about all the nerdy records that you both like. On the other hand, what have I been doing for the last eight years that hasn't involved a steady diet of The Creeps? *Lakeside Cabin*, these boys' third full-length record, is an insanely catchy combination of mid-period Alkaline Trio and *Backchannel Broadcast*-era Lillingtons with fittingly dark, creepy lyrics that (luckily) avoid any hint of horror punk cheesiness. With any luck, this band will be right at the top of the Insubordination Fest heap of pop punk bands that both the kids and the grown ups can dig. Seriously, track this shit down. —Dave Williams (Black Pint)

#### CREOSOTE: *Life Lessons*: 7"

Skip right to the second side of this crusty piece of wax. There, you'll hear one of the most intriguing guitar sounds ever placed in this type of tune. Do you know those little door stops that are springs with a little piece of rubber on them? You know that sound they make when you accidentally hit one with your foot? That rad vibrating sound? Well, if that sound came rumbling out of a guitar, that would be what the opening riffs of the song "More than a Drinking Buddy" came from. After you listen to that part, though, you might want to



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turn it off, unless you're into female vocals that sound sort of like a little girl showing up to church a day early for choir practice and deciding she should sing alone, all weak and off pitch. —MP Johnson (Music For Social Change)

#### CRIME IN STEREO: ...Is Dead: LP

I'm hoping that the title of this album is a non-ironic reference to the timely passing of Crime In Stereo. At times, it sounds like an early '90s Jade Tree version of At The Drive In, only far more self-consciously earnest, with the singer doing his most heartfelt impression of the Promise Ring's lead singer circa the time their first album came out. At others, they're a bad DJ away from pulling off a spot-on aural replication of Incubus, which would have to stand as one of history's greatest crimes against humanity...or, at the very least, the *Razorcake* readership. Is this what's passing for hardcore these days? I thought Bridge 9 brought the fucked up, boot stompin' brand of hardcore where mind-melting breakdowns were around every musical corner and the vocals recalled the tortured screams of suspected terrorists in the midst of a shadow government's rendition. This sounds like a parakeet chirping in comparison. —Josh Benke (Bridge 9)

#### CROWD, THE: Letter Bomb: CD

This record is a re-release of the 1996 *Letter Bomb* LP with the 1995 *Dig Yourself* EP as bonus tracks. Sooo, I never really listened to The Crowd in the past and had to get a crash course in

who they were and their discography. In the end, they get my vote; this is a very solid record, catchy, poppy, with lots of bitter twists thrown into the mix. Me like. Twelve years removed from its original release, I'm sure that these tunes still stand up and sound fresh. Another very welcome release from TKO. —The Lord Kveldulfr (TKO)

#### D.O.N.D.O.N.: Last Warning: LP

A little history here. This was originally released in Japan in 1991 and there were only 200 pressed. I'm guessing only a handful ever made it out of the country with that kind of press run, but the fine folks at Schizophrenic Records unearthed a gem. Not only do they re-release this, but they also include comp tracks to fill out this reissue. This deservedly needed to be put back out there. The distinct style of punk that this band plays is very distinctively Japanese and should be mentioned in the same breath as one of the great punk bands out of Japan like The Execute, Lip Cream, Gauze, or GISM. They thrash with fury and add that slight crossover element that was popular in that time period—almost purely manic, yet controlled with such precision. Melodic, metallic, and fast bursts of sheer power. It is a sound that makes many people obsessive about punk music from Japan; it's a sound that is hard to duplicate if you are not from the country. You feel like your heart is about to burst but a smile overtakes your face. Such a great release that if there is an inkling of interest, you'd better act fast. I hear they were only pressing 300 on

cool multi colored vinyl. There is a CD version if you snooze. —Donofthead (Schizophrenic)

#### DAILY VOID: Self-titled: 7"

Boring riffs and god damn fucking repetitive and predictable. Good lord. —Corinne (Boom Chick)

#### DAYGLOW ABORTIONS:

##### Out of the Womb: LP

It's been damn near three decades since this LP reared its ugly, fluorescent orange head. A long sought after piece of Canadian scum punk history that has finally been reissued in its original glory for all to know and love (loathe?). While the Dayglos (note: the "w" was dropped after this release) of later years may have trudged down the metallic path that many hardcore bands did in the mid '80s, *OOTW* is pure punk thrash craziness... Well, okay, there's a bit of metal in there too ("Acting like Black Sabbath"). Most of the band's best songs can be found here, including "Germ Attack," "I Killed Mommy," and "Religious Bumfucks," to name a few. You know, after all these years it's pretty amazing how witty, funny, and well crafted these songs are, yet they only get remembered for their crudeness. Cheers to Unrest Records for reissuing the entire back catalog on vinyl. —Ty Stranglehold (Unrest)

#### DEVILLES, THE:

##### Switchblades & Heartaches: CD

Eight-song disc from this Long Island band. Seems like a group of ex-

hardcore dudes lookin' to play some rock'n'roll. The songs sound a lot like the Gotohells, or another group of Supersuckers/Social Distortion-loving rockers. —Mike Frame (Motherbox)

#### DEMENTED ARE GO:

##### In Sickness & In Health: CD

#### DEMENTED ARE GO:

##### Kicked out of Hell: CD

Most known musically for their scratching vocals, deliberate and twangy guitar, and disciplined bass control, DAG are one of the founding members of British psychobilly. Mark Phillips' heavily parted, panty-creaming, baritone voice is one of the most imitated today. They pushed the envelope on gory and perverse lyrical content and perplexed audiences with their often gender-bending appearance. *In Sickness & In Health* is their first long-player, released in 1986 on ID Records. It includes favorites like "Pervy in the Park," "(I Was Born A) Busted Hymen," "Holy Hack Jack," "Rubber Love," and "Don't Go in the Woods." *Kicked out of Hell* is a reissue of their second full-length album, originally released in 1988, also on ID. Includes standards like "Satan's Rejects," "Cripple in the Woods," and "Cast Iron Arm," and some of my own favorites, "Shadow Crypt," "Old Black Joe," and "Vietnam." Both albums are excellent reminders that psychobilly is a culmination of a decades of influences and musical talent beyond merely sick, sloppy, fast, and out of control. —Jessica T (Anagram/Cherry Red)

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#### DEMENTED ARE GO:

##### **The Day the Earth Spat Blood: CD**

This band sounds insane. The singer growls and cackles over drums that sound like they're coming from some cobweb-covered tomb somewhere. The guitar is a bearded hydra breathing fire into every shadowy corner that the bass rumbles around in. Unnerving asylum laughter and multi-personality ramblings ebb and flow out of songs at random points. At times, it sounds like it's standing behind you, just waiting for an opportunity to put its thick hands on your head and crush your skull, not even understanding how serious the crime it's committing really is. The reissue of this psychobilly album from '89 comes with a bonus live set that was previously released in '90. —MP Johnson (Cherry Red)

#### DIRTBOMBS, THE:

##### **We Have You Surrounded: CD**

The Dirtbombs have big brushes. They're painting whole sides of buildings in broad swaths, not just doing detail work on a dirty toilet in the garage rock ghetto. Nick Collins is my generation's underground answer to Otis Redding with a more ambitious selection of cover songs (Sparks, Dead Moon, a song intended for Bauhaus this time around). It's soulful music played with such force, taste, and restraint that the one true shame is that the rest of the world is asleep at the wheel when it comes to The Dirtbombs (in a time when Stax is getting some of the notoriety it so richly deserves). Has

it really been nearly twenty years since that first Gories LP? Damn, it's a long journey from *House Rockin'*, and I have to say I like both of these book-ending records equally as well for completely different reasons. How many artists can you say that about? If you haven't already checked out the Dirtbombs, the double CD of singles that In The Red released a couple years back is a good, hearty view of this band, too. —Todd (In The Red, [www.inthered.com](http://www.inthered.com))

#### DRIZZLE: Self-titled: CD

The cover art screams Flogging Molly-loving pirates! The music contained within, however, sounds more like dirty Pabst-stained basement show punk rock. These guys would be at home playing shows with Scared Of Chaka, Dillinger Four, Witches With Dicks and the like. Not too shabby for a band that's been around for over nine years (per the website). —Mr. Z (Moresmarthanyou)

#### ENVIRONMENTAL YOUTH CRUNCH:

##### **Let's Ride: LP**

At first, I was all like, "If EYC says, 'Let's ride,' I'm there!" because I was pretty sure they'd be going to some awesome place. Then I started thinking that they might wanna ride out to a campfire; so, I was thinking that I'd just stay home. Then I was like, "Wait, do they wanna go to a bar? It doesn't sound like a bar I wanna go to, but maybe it is..." At the end, I was thinking that they wanted to go Xmas caroling, and I was like, "Yeah, it's cool. I think I see my bus coming." Let me reiterate.

When they're on, they're pretty all right. It kinda reminds me of Tulsa. A less zany, cleaner, more structured Tulsa. They have some rockin' guitar leads that came at me like a curve ball, but they don't ruin the tracks. There are two acoustic songs that are sequenced near the middle of each side. One has a sing-along feel; the other has more of a story time sound. Neither of them is that bad, they just hurt the album's flow. Then there's the last track. Well, um, it sounds like a goddamn Xmas carol. I don't understand why it's on here, but I'm glad it's at the end. —Vincent (Bring Back The Magic / Dead Tank)

#### ESTRANGED, THE: Self-titled:

##### **"Fast Train" b/w "The Masses": 7"**

**ESTRANGED, THE: Sacred Decay: 45 7"**  
Cold, grey, distant, and discordant, but undeniably powerful, The Estranged isn't happy face music. It's not easy-gloom music either (which tends to break out the Misfits copy machine and fingers into skeleton gloves). Think along the lines of the darkness and intensity of Articles Of Faith. (After thirteen years of reviewing, I can't think of another band that's been more equal or suited to that comparison.) Medium-paced, gripping, hand-wringing music that takes its time, and makes sure you know that you're in a place of their making. Don't be expecting the post-nuclear d-beat holocaust of From Ashes Rise or Hellshock (of which members come from), go into this with the feeling that you're about to be stalked and hunted musically, on a personal level,

through a scope. This shit's intense in an awesome (in the original meaning of the word) way. It's well worth your time. —Todd (Self-titled: Black Water, Sacred Decay: Green Noise)

#### ESTROGEN HIGHS:

##### **E Major D Construction: 7"**

Minimalist, lo-fi, garage that walks the boundaries of the genre. Occasional growling vocals and operatic feedback outros really fly the freak flag on an otherwise standard rock'n'rollin' 7". But on top of the freaky garage rock, the cover art contains both stencil art and stamper lettering, which are two classic forms of DIY art that are skillfully executed. —Daryl (Self-released)

#### EVANGELISTA: Hello, Voyager: CD

Back in 2006, I interviewed Carla Bozulich about *Evangelista*, her first record on Montreal's Constellation label, produced by Efrim Menuck of Godspeed You! Black Emperor and A Silver Mt. Zion, and featuring members of same. We'd discussed how the album was (mis)taken by various listeners for "torment," "an attack on the senses," or an "exorcism." Bozulich's own intent was to produce something that acknowledged pain, but to a healing end; it was "for people that can respond to sound and love the way other people respond to God," for people who use music "to lift themselves up and rise up above things that might normally kick their ass." Her new album, now under the band name Evangelista (and again on Constellation with Efrim and Co.

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on board, along with Shazad Ismaily and Tara Barnes) continues in the same vein—and, at-times, painful exaltation with cathartic stabs at transcendence and an emotional range that contains melancholy at one end and a violent, rapturous release at the other. A few tracks (“Smooth Jazz,” “Truth Is Dark Like Outer Space,” and “Hello, Voyager” itself, which scares me a bit) are even tougher than anything on the previous album—“The Blue Mask” tough, “Radio Ethiopia” tough, Kim Gordon doing “I Wanna Be Your Dog” tough—while a sassy, streetwise, fuck-you playfulness peeks in elsewhere (“Lucky Lucky Luck”). The one track that I can’t quite hook onto yet is the mournful, gentle “The Blue Room,” with fellow former Geraldine Fibbers member Nels Cline contributing winsome acoustic twelve-string work. It’s pretty and the lyrics are moving, but it’s a bit too sonically nice for the rough-and-tumble forcefulness of the rest of the disc, and makes the album still a tad less cohesive than the previous. Still, this is one strong-as-fuck rock record, and it’d be nice if more people realized how great Bozulich was. —Allan MacInnis (Constellation)

#### EYE FOR AN EYE: Gra: LP

Not the tough guy hardcore band from Boston, but a band from Poland. This female-led band bridges a fine line between punk, hardcore, and metal while still maintaining melody. The production on this recording is in league with many releases I have heard from major label bands. With that, the band really shines

and the power comes through. The vocals that are sung in Polish are yelled forcefully and are controlled in delivery but also have an almost sung quality to them. The guitars are bright and chunky, giving them a powerful metal sound that many people fail to achieve. Drums pound through the speakers, wailing bass into your ears and the crash of the cymbals slap you in the face. Bass guitar ties it all in with it a well-rounded tone. In the past, I only dabbled here and there with bands from that region. But lately, every release I have received has been excellent. It definitely has become one of my new favorite countries to get music from. If I was writing this review one day earlier, I definitely would have put this on my Top 5 for this issue. Now the quest is on for the first LP that I just heard about. —Donofthedeat (Pasazer)

#### F.L.A.K.: Fearing Lost Apocalyptic Knowledge: LP

I was expecting epic power metal or Norwegian death metal from the cover of this LP. Ended up with fast, fairly standard thrash. The band is from Pittsburgh and play blown-out thrash for fans of Mob 47, Anti Cimex, and the like. Limited edition of 300 copies, so move fast if this is your style. —Mike Frame (Hashshashinrecords@gmail.com)

#### FACTUMS: Spells and Charms: CD

These guys really don’t put up any pretense of being a “rock” band and just go balls out into skronking it up. What makes ‘em special, though, is rather than just pummel you with eighty

minutes of static patterns, they are very conscious of dynamics and use ‘em well to break up the onset of any monotony. Sometimes, this reminds me of stuff like the Swans’ *Body to Body Job to Job* record with its little bits of noisy loopy stuff followed by something that resembles, at least in structure, a song. Good stuff if yer feelin’ adventurous. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kill Shaman)

#### FEW AND THE PROUD: Stampede: LP

The preachy, self-righteous, downright serious tone of the message the Few And The Proud are delivering turned me off of this release immediately. Straight edge is fine as a lifestyle choice, but the narcissistic attitude that oozes through the lyrics of this album is a drag, and, frankly, nobody gives a shit what any of these guys do or do not put in their bodies. The generic hardcore music didn’t help much, either. —Josh Benke (Underground Communiqué)

#### FILTHY FEW: Wealth & Hell-Being: CD

Man, I get all the ultra-PC stuff, don’t I? I kid, of course, as this thing is laden with paintings of strippers and potentially alienating lyrics. The music is loud and hard punk in a Candy Snatchers vein, with a slight sprinkle of rockabilly, and isn’t half bad. I wish I could recommend it, but the content is too annoying to get me stoked. When you’re naming your songs “Gonna Buy Me a Girl,” what do you expect a reviewer to say? —Will Kwiatkowski (Ass End)

#### FRANCINE: King for a Day: CD

Finnish rock’n’roll with a full-bodied, highly produced and tenured pop rock sound. Distributed in the U.S. on Cargo, Francine has “Exported for Cargo” stamped all over their shipping crate (think Inch, Heavy Vegetable, and fluf). Has the look, feel, and sound of a borderline mainstream rock act that would be signed to an imprint and spun on KROQ to gauge reaction before releasing their sophomore effort on a major. Then they would stall because mega A&R guy misjudged the market and they sold 10,000 records to local college guys instead of 1,000,000 to a nation of screaming consumer units. —Jessica T (Wolverine)

#### FREEZE, THE: Rabid Reaction: LP

Who is one of the biggest Freeze fans you know? I say Schizophrenic Records because they are digging deep into their pockets to re-release another Freeze release on vinyl. If you have ever gone through the process of pressing a record, you definitely know it’s not cheap. It is even more expensive if you do multi-colored like this one I have in my hands, which is a green and red mix. So, this time around, they give a vinyl release of the second album which originally was released on Modern Method Records. It’s punk rock from Boston that was different from many of their contemporaries in the area. They didn’t embrace hardcore like so many bands did. They continued to play straight up with melody and more of a rocking vibe, like they were having



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fun, acting silly, and trying to give people a genuine good time. Listening now and not hearing these songs after many, many years, I can truly say these songs stood the test of time. This release should never go out of print so people from years to come get to hear this like Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Fear, or the Adolescents. It's a great gateway release for someone getting into punk or just going back in history. —Donofthedeath (Schizophrenic)

#### FRIENDLY FIRE: Demo 2008: CD-R

Punk rock from D.C. that will remind one a bit of the Minutemen and Hüsker Dü. I've been listening to these six songs a few times a day since I got this for review, and I recommend that you do the same. The quality is decent, as far as CD-R demos go, remaining raw enough to not let you forget that it's a demo but not raw enough to appear to lose anything in the translation. I'll definitely be making a trip down to see these guys in action next time I get chance. —Dave Dillon (Self-released)

#### FT (THE SHADOW GOVERNMENT): Black and White Album: 12"

This Iowa City band piles on the noise! From the liner notes and enclosed information, it's apparent they are paranoid, conspiracy-laden, and into drugs and electronics. Some songs are bleeps and squeals while others come off as Fugazi-esque. This release is on white and black vinyl (looks cool spinning on my turntable), and was reportedly recorded in ten

different locations. Steve Albini did a track as well! I recommend checking this album out, if not for the diversity of the arrangement. One minute you could segue it into Foetus, the next with Black Dice. If you like live musicians playing profusely with electronics as well, this is a score. —Buttertooth (Scenester Credentials)

#### FUCK THIS / STATE: Split: 7"

The Fuck This side is great—straight-up hardcore that was comforting in its familiar sounds, but still didn't sound derivative at all, kind of like when after eating a bajillion meatloaves in life, someone comes along with a recipe that is standard yet still succulent. The State side is still good and all, but it has a much crustier beat to it, like the top of the meatloaf got burned and the female vocals are like some tangy sort of ketchup-based sauce slathered on the top. All in all, a good record, but I like how the Fuck This side tastes over State. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Punk Before Profits)

#### GENUINE IMITATORS:

##### 22 Songs About Hamsters: CD

Eleven minimalist tracks (not about hamsters) with drums like the Germs, bass like SST bands, and non sequitur vocals and lyrics like the Dead Milkmen. Chaotic, carefree, unfocused, and reminiscent of the early years of punk. —Jessica T (Cal Rock)

#### GET RAD / CALL ME LIGHTNING: Split 7"

Here you have two Milwaukee bands

teaming up for a 7" that has them covering each other's songs. Get Rad does hardcore covers of Call Me Lightning's "Ghosts in the Mirror" and "We Be Dragons" and CML does some covers with a rock'n'roll feel of "Say Fuck No to Rules" and "You Over Rotated" by Get Rad. The fact that the bands covered each other's songs in their own style as opposed to trying to copy the style of the original makes this record way more interesting. Usually, records like this come out sounding like a train wreck, but these bands definitely know their way around each other's songs. Totally energetic and fun, even if you aren't familiar with the band's original material. Limited to 600, 300 on blue and 300 on clear vinyl. —Dave Dillon (Scenester Credentials)

#### GITO GITO HUSTLER: What's My...!?: 7"

Catchy and cute. If the Dickies toured Japan in the late '70s and their illegitimate offspring formed a girl band, they'd sound just like Gito Gito Hustler. I could spin this record all day long. —Jim Ruland (Big Neck)

#### GOD DAMN DOO WOP BAND, THE: I'll Always Be Your Girl: 7"

Yay! This band rules! Punk rockers form a doo wop band! Punk rockers wear ridiculous prom dresses at their shows! Yes! Yes! Yes! If you're not a total idiot, then you acknowledge the continuum that exists, starting with '50s rock'n'roll, going through '60s girls groups, straight to Joey Ramone and Co. This continuum

needs to be celebrated and explored by all reasonable punk rockers! And the God Damn Doo Wop Band totally gets this! If this were a cereal, it'd be Quisp, a '60s cereal pulled from the market in the '70s only to be revived a decade later! And it's tasty, too! —Maddy (Self-released)

#### GOLDEN SHOULDERS:

##### Friendship Is Deep: CD

At first I thought this band was called Golden Showers. That would've made this album a lot more fun because then I could've reconciled the sound of the Beatles getting fucked by indie-pop with the idea of the singer getting peed on. Or perhaps I'm supposed to feel like I've been hit with golden showers while I listen to this. Well, it's not quite *that* bad, but I still don't like it. —Kurt Morris (Welcome Home)

#### GOOD RIDDANCE: Remain in Memory —The Final Show: CD

Back in 1995, I was at my local record store digging through the used bin of CDs when I came across a CD by a band I had not heard of. I grabbed it and went to the listening station that the store had. First song was "Flies First Class" and instantly I was pulled in by the mixture of punk rock rage and melodic flair. I was officially a fan. As years went by, I either bought or received for review every release and enjoyed every one of them. The band continued to get better in writing and musicianship. One thing I didn't do was go see them live more than three times. So, I was a half-assed fan



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since I didn't participate and support all the way. As the title of this release states, the band has met their demise and called it a day. Not a sad thing since they left on a good note and not on the downswing. A twelve year history in punk rock is a noble one that many bands can not claim. A good cross-section is covered here with songs from just about every release they put out. I'm truly happy that they included "Credit to his Gender" off the *A Comprehensive Guide to Moderne Rebellion* LP. It's my absolute favorite of the bunch and also brings back Cinder Block from Tilt/Retching Red who originally sang on the song. Now, is there a DVD on the way from this show too? If so, I want one! —Donofthead (Fat)

#### GUN CLUB, THE:

##### **Ahmed's Wild Dream (reissue): CD**

*Ahmed's Wild Dream* (2008) is a reissue of the Gun Club's hard-to-find album of the same name. Originally put out in 1993—three years before (Gun Club figurehead) Jeffrey Lee Pierce's untimely death—*Ahmed's* equitably culls songs from the Gun Club's then-current catalogue, spanning 1981's *Fire of Love* to 1990's *Pastoral Hide and Seek*. The recording on *Ahmed's* is of soundboard quality and the group's performance is amazing. Although the second lineup of the Gun Club (the band represented here—Pierce, Romi Mori, Nick Sanderson, Kid Congo Powers) is often shortchanged by fans, it was of equal artistic stature as the original group—but for very different reasons, namely a maturation in Jeffrey's songwriting and guitar playing. Simply

put, the first Gun Club (1981-1984) and the second Gun Club (1984-1994) were so conceptually and stylistically different from one another that they're the same band in name only. And it's the qualities found in the second lineup that naturally stand out on *Ahmed's*. Lyrically some of Jeffrey's strongest material is present—the East Los Angeles recollections of "Lupita Screams" and the anti-imperialism protests of "Another Country's Young," the latter an erudite expedition into hitherto unknown subject matter just prior to the release of *Ahmed's*. Musically the group is tight beyond belief, but what really stands out is Pierce's guitar playing, particularly on "Go Tell the Mountain," a song that has long instrumentation showcasing Jeffrey's sublime guitar playing. And it's Pierce's guitar work that's the real gem of this album. It's fucking hypnotic—someone once asked me if Dave Alvin dubbed over Jeffrey's guitar work from this period; nope: Pierce had gotten that good! There is a slight drawback to *Ahmed's*: its well-roundedness. Normally, this would be an asset to a live album, but the early stuff ("Sex Beat," "Preachin' the Blues") seems more like a concession to fans than the Gun Club's desire to play earlier tracks. *The Fire of Love*-era songs on *Ahmed's* are good, but they're fucking awesome with the 1981 lineup. And this is probably indicative of Jeffrey's restlessness: he was always changing, irrespective of trends or others' desires. Just as I have difficulty envisioning Ward Dotson playing "Another Country's Young," there's a

slight amount of cognitive dissonance I feel hearing this lineup play "Preachin' the Blues." Nevertheless, *Ahmed's* is a strong live album from the Gun Club.... A testament to Jeffrey Lee Pierce's deserved position as one of Los Angeles's greatest songwriters. —Ryan Leach (Cherry Red, [www.cherryred.co.uk](http://www.cherryred.co.uk))

##### **HEX DISPENSERS: Lose My Cool: 7" EP**

How the Hex Dispensers are like Frankenstein's monster: 1) Lightning from above. 2) Demon-like power. 3) Pissed, but rightfully so. 4) Stomping around right after their creation, looking for friends amongst unprejudiced innocents. Except, they do it in a musical village populated by the likes of The Marked Men and The Wipers (who they cover); it's a pop-driven, power garage music world with kinship from The Brotherhood Of Electricity. How the Hex Dispensers are *not* like Frankenstein's monster: 1) They actually have a name. 2) When they were created, their maker didn't immediately flee and renounce his abomination. 3) The Hex Dispensers have both men and women in the band and Dr. Frankenstein ultimately reneged on his promise to make a lady monster for his dude monster, thus totally bumming his male monster out to the point where he eventually committed suicide above the Arctic Circle. Result: Hex Dispensers rock harder than a bad-ass, self-conflicted monster that could snap your neck with one hand. —Todd (Douchemaster)

##### **HISTORY: Ghosts in the City: CD**

A heavy mid/late-'80s Dischord influence is all over this, so the emotings are in abundance. Lord knows it ain't my cup o' poison, but their reliance on a direct tapping of the emo source rather than more contemporary stuff makes for a much edgier sound, a performance that exudes more conviction, and a bit more creativity in how the songs are structured. They've also got some good hooks, which never hurts. —Jimmy Alvarado (24 Hr. Service Station)

##### **HOLY SHIT! / TURD HUNGRY CHRIST: You Are what You Eat: Split 7"**

This is a split 7". Holy Shit! is from Milwaukee. Turd Hungry Christ is from Chattanooga, TN, and has members of Spawn Sacs, Future Virgins, Jack Palance Band, and ADD/C. For a band with members of Future Virgins and Jack Palance Band, it has got a lot less pop to it than I expected. It's screamy with garage rock influences. You can tell that it's funny dudes though if you look at the artwork and insert. I like the lyrics to Holy Shit! in particular: "We're poor, fuck you." Mmmmm, I like it. Probably 'cause I can relate. —Corinne (Scattered, Smothered and Covered)

##### **HOT WATER MUSIC:**

##### **Till the Wheels Fall Off: CD**

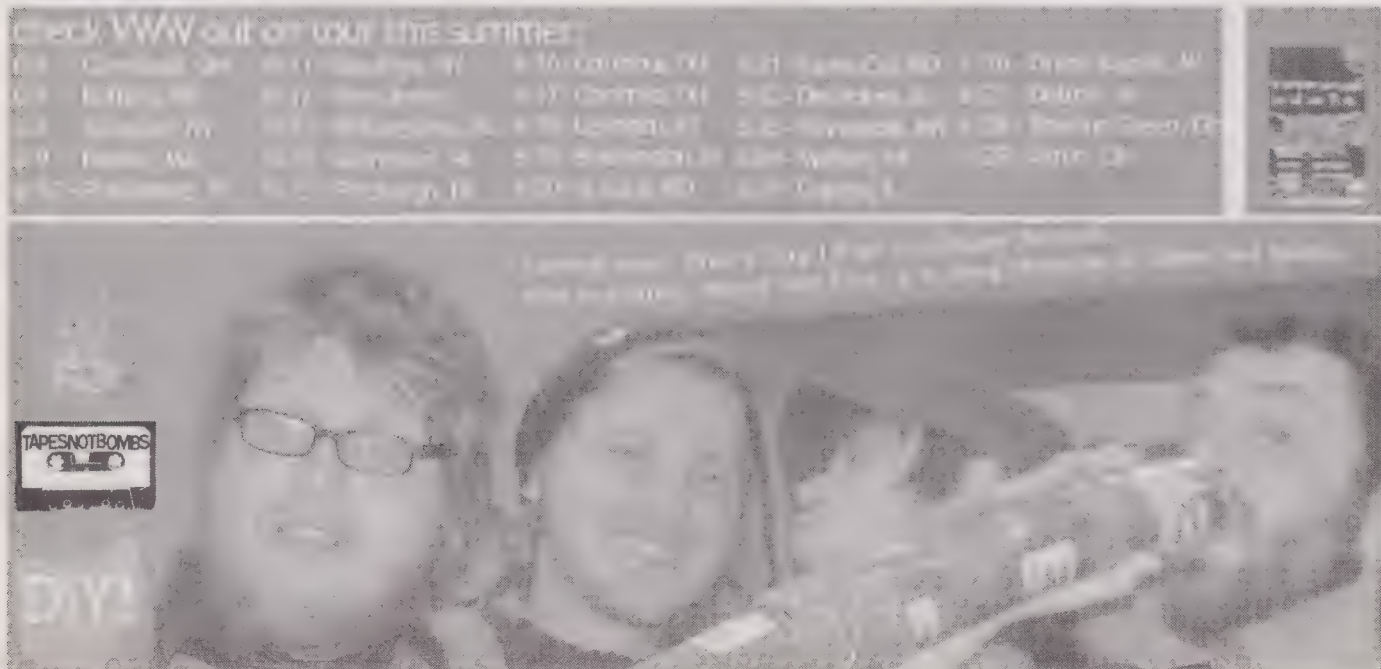
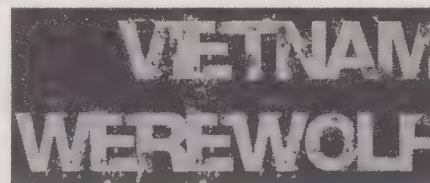
This is Hot Water Music's second B-sides record, focusing on the latter half of their recorded output, more or less the Epitaph years. Every song brings some quality to the table, ranging from



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outtakes of their last three records and a few 7"s, to a variety of covers: Circle Jerks, Leatherface, etc. Despite some recent shows, I guess the wheels have fallen off, and that makes this album the spare tire. Its not something to ride on too long, but if you need more than what they've released on the full lengths, this holds up. Of course, if you're missing a proper HWM record, get that first. —Nick Toerner (No Idea)

#### HOWITZER: *Turncoat: 7"*

Howitzer plays awesome hardcore-influenced oi reminiscent of a slightly less dopey Patriot. Or maybe it's oi-influenced hardcore that they're going for. In any event, this is super tough, super mean, and super hilarious. Knee-jerk types might take a quick listen and plunk Howitzer into the jingoistic, nationalistic tripe drawer, but the surprising anti-war lyrics on this one defy skin stereotypes. —Art Ettinger (Hazard Hill)

#### HUMANIFESTO / I AM THE CARTOGRAPHER: *Split: 7"*

Humanifesto: Treading ground musically along the lines of Good Riddance and Boy Sets Fire, but not nearly as tight as either of those bands. The lyrics have a social awareness like the above two bands and later Fifteen material. I Am The Cartographer: Remember *Fiddler on the Roof*? Good. [clearing my throat] *Map maker, map maker make me a map, find me a...* Sorry. Okay, the band... Lyrically, they have the same kinda thing goin' on as Humanifesto. Not bad. Musically, they are like a poppy

HWM and gravelly vocals sometimes hitting like early Fifteen-era Jeff Ott, but not quite there on either count. The second track is acoustic, and it probably would've worked better as a track with the full band. Overall: Neither band is suck territory; however, this release sounds premature. —Vincent (Hip Kid)

#### IMPULSE INT'L, THE: *Arm the Girls: 7"*

This New Jersey trio is comprised of ex-members of pop punk darlings Dirt Bike Annie and I feel like this is something that I should totally love, but I'm just not feeling it. It's totally competent, catchy, jangly power pop, but I think I'm just getting a little burned out on this kinda thing. Musically, I'd toss it somewhere between the Mick-fronted Clash songs and any number of the essential '70s power pop bands. Probably if I'd heard this a year ago, I'd have been pretty stoked about it, but right now I think it's just alright. Fun and dance-y, but I usually need a bit more than that to knock me out. —Dave Williams (Deranged)

#### IRON LUNG: *Sexless // No Sex: CD*

It's kind of shitty when after you've anticipated such a heavy album for so long that when it finally finishes, the walls of your living room are still standing. But then you gotta snap out of it and remind yourself that powerviolence can't actually destroy a house, but at least it forced your Cat Stevens-listening roommates into their rooms. I wish every jerk that has deemed powerviolence as a genre to be confining could hear this album and acknowledge

how big of jerks they are. At times you may think you're listening to someone repeatedly slamming a dungeon door shut, but it's just the crunching doom that is this duo. —Daryl (Prank)

#### JET BOYS: *Teenage Thunder Revisited: LP*

Like the frenzy of a good, old-fashioned Japanese whale slaughter comes the rip roaring sonic pandemonium of the Jet Boys. It's got the glam swagger of the Joneses, the cocky looseness of the Heartbreakers, and the intense ferocity of the Carbonas, all delivered like a snot rocket from the nose of Johnny Rotten. My recommendation is to start with side two, as the first four songs on it are absolute punk monsters. But, be warned—the needle of the record player may well solder itself to the wax due to the resulting eruption of rock'n'roll magma. "Kick out the Poster" should be the National Anthem of the underground, and "Power Kids" the state song. I haven't got any info about whether these guys are a living, breathing band, or if *Teenage Thunder Revisited* is a reissue. It doesn't matter much, as this is one of the best '77-inspired slabs to come down the pipe in years. And if you don't like it? "I don't care/Kiss my ass!" —Josh Benke (Demolition Derby)

#### JULIE OCEAN:

##### *Long Gone and Nearly There: CD*

What do you get when you throw scene vets from Velocity Girl, Swiz, The Saturday People, and Weatherhead into a ski-lodge like recording studio?

Apparently, a sugary sweet confection of power pop gems is the answer. "#1 Song" could be just that, but wait—there's more. "At the Appointed Hour" has a bit of Weller influence in there. Most of the tunes are under three minutes long, like most of the best songs of this genre. But even the epic-length of "Here Comes Danny" fails to disappoint. If guitar-driven pop with killer hooks sounds like your ballgame, then don't strike out. "Put the needle on the record" and dig the new breed: Julie Ocean! —Sean Koepenick (Transit Of Venus)

#### KK RAMPAGE: *Without Feelings: CD*

Full-on skronk rock from a former Functional Blackout and his latest batch of malcontent buddies. While the stuff here lacks the Blackouts' balanced noise : rock ratio, they more than make up for it in atonal aural agony. —Jimmy Alvarado (Big Neck)

#### KLONDIKE'S NORTH 40: *The Straight Path: CD*

I really do not like reviewing records. The reason: I tell it like it is. If a record is shit, I will destroy it. Lackluster bands shouldn't waste my time or *Razorcake's* pages; and I don't want impressionable kids—y'know, whippersnappers like me at sixteen—buying garbage. That said, I often get into trouble when reviewing "legends"—like I really didn't want to pan Gary Burger's (of the Monks) new 45, but it was a pile of manure (so is the Dirtbombs' new LP). That's painful, but I'm not judging Mick Collins or Gary Burger's respective careers—just



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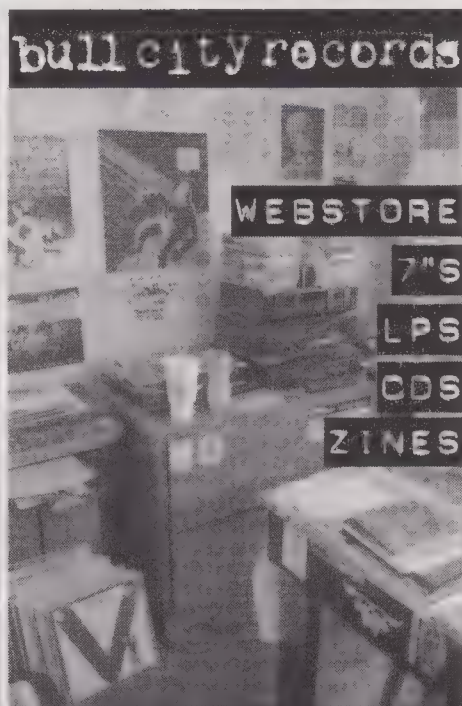
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their latest works. However, there is a plus side to this dilemma: sometimes a "legend" comes through. And in the case of The Straight Path, ex-Radio Birdman guitarist Chris "Klondike" Masuak is hitting pay dirt. Some of the best elements of Birdman are here: thoroughly Australian harmonies, strong lyrics, and excellent (!) guitar playing. The Straight Path has the definite stamp of an ex-Birdman; it's also reminiscent of some of the Replacements latter-day records (*Tim and Pleased to Meet Me*) as Masuak's voice sounds a bit like Westerberg's. Refreshingly at fifty-plus years of age, Masuak's subject matter has grown with his life's experiences—a definite plus to the countless "legends" who simply revive their old formula. Way to go, Klondike. —Ryan Leach (I-94, [www.i94barrecords.com](http://www.i94barrecords.com))

**KNIFETHRUHEAD: Live 02/04/05: 7"**

This record couldn't be any shittier if it were pressed on the steaming poop of winged gargoyles. I could be way off on this, but I'm pretty certain most people don't want to hear a live recording of a non-band dinking around in front of a room full of screaming drunks, even if it does involve saxophone. Maybe they should just climb into the fancy white pickup truck they're standing beside on the cover and drive off to Dickheadville or some other imaginary land full of nut jobs who want to listen to them try to be offensive while wearing Halloween masks and skull jockstraps. —MP Johnson (Wild Huntsman)

**KUNG FU USA: Neversign: CD**

The artwork on this release definitely deserves mention. It is a collage of record label imprints. There are majors and indies all over it, but not the one of the band's actual label, Starcleaner, which makes it not only confusing, but impossible to tell who released this without previous knowledge (that I didn't have). So, how does it sound? Well, this is another band with Shell and Jen (of Shellshag). Like 50 Million's *Broad Side* that I checked out this cycle, it isn't a recent release. It came out in 2002. Listening to it though, I would have thought that it came out in the early '90s—it has a definite indie alternative vibe (whatever that means). It's daring and dirty. It's sarcastic, spastic, and super catchy. The verses catch you and keep you tuned until the choruses get you hooked. This is a definite for fans of Nirvana, Pixies, Pavement, Sonic Youth, Shellac, or even Magnapop. Again, like 50 Million, this gets a, "Holy fuck. What was I doing to miss this?" I hope it was worth it, whatever it was. —Vincent (Starcleaner, [www.starcleaner.com](http://www.starcleaner.com))

**LANDMINE MARATHON / SCARECROW: Split: CD**

Landmine Marathon is pretty standard death-metal stuff, but Scarecrow fuggin' rules! Very heavy early Metallica influence, even down to some of the chord progressions. Not that that's bad; I was completely undone with pleasure. Imagine Metallica from the *Kill 'Em All*-era with a wee bit

more rock'n'roll in the concoction and a vocalist who sings in a more standard everyman fashion than the gruff and raspy Hetfield. Landmine Marathon: they were okay. Scarecrow: awesome. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Level-Plane, [www.level-plane.com](http://www.level-plane.com))

**LEGION OF PARASITES:**

**Another Disaster: CD**

A couple of demos and the first LP from these long-gone Limey thrashers are compiled together. It starts off a bit rough, but things get damned good pretty quick. Great first volume in what while be a multi-part overview of this oft-overlooked band. —Jimmy Alvarado (Overground)

**LIKE WOLVES: Self-titled: CD**

Serviceable modern hardcore that keeps things angry and the metal to a bare minimum. —Jimmy Alvarado (Like Wolves)

**LIVE FAST DIE: Got Nitedo: 7"**

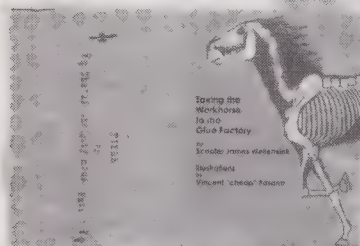
Botched brain surgery rock'n'roll from the scrambled frontal lobes of Live Fast Die. There's one song each from the three previous calendar years, and the oldest, "Got Nitedo (2005)," stands out like a shining gold medal at the Special Olympics. It's a half-retarded lament about fucking up one's arm playing Nintendo, and, being half-retarded, not knowing how to properly pronounce "Nintendo." Visualize a mentally handicapped person jacked up on cotton candy and knock-knock jokes, trying to figure out how to work

an electric can opener and you'll be properly mush minded enough to enjoy the song to its fullest extent. "Do I Look like a Bank (To You)" comes from 2007 and has the carpet-staples-raked-over-a-classroom-chalkboard guitar screech and nasally distorted vocals that got me all hot and bothered over *Bandana Thrash Record*. The flip is a meandering song inspired by a memorable bout of message board shit talking that took place a while back. It's funny, but the joke is kind of lost if you weren't around to read the exchange as it unfolded. Side A is well worth shelling out the dough. —Josh Benke (Boom Chick)

**LOADED FOR BEAR / BIZARRE X: Split: CD**

This is a nice little grindcore split. Loaded For Bear from the U.S. leads it off and has more of a distorted and screamy crust edge to their sound than Bizarre X from Germany. Loaded For Bear is also really enamored of using sound clips in between their stuff. In fact, I think if you added it all together, their side of the split might have more sound clips than actual music, especially when considering that three of their fourteen songs are under five seconds long. Bizarre X isn't as heavy or intense as Loaded For Bear, which works against them and makes their side of the split feel more lackluster. What I find massively entertaining is that the songs for both bands have lyrics that are very involved and thought out, but

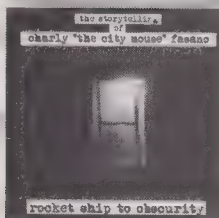
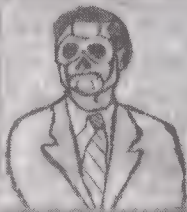
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completely unintelligible even with the lyric book. I seriously don't know how it is they're supposed to be saying what's written in the lyric sheet when some of the syllable grunts end up being a couple of whole sentences. At any rate, this album is worth checking out if only to get your daily amelodic speed fix on the Loaded For Bear half, although I can't say I've ever heard any grind yet that's interesting as more than just a novelty, except for maybe The Locust. —Adrian (On the Warpath, Backgroundnoisemediacorps, Hip Kid, One Sock)

#### LOOM: Angler: CD

Solid emo, like back when At the Drive In was what emo meant. Except these guys added a girl who plays violin while they play the jagged, spastic riffs. I hear their live show is pretty amazing and they somehow orchestrate the lights to the music. Utah does strange things to people, and I guess this band is trying to find a way out of that 3.2 beer-having, Mormon hellhole. —Buttertooth (Exigent)

#### LOST LOCKER COMBO:

##### Freshman Orientation: CD

The label says "Its like *School of Rock* meets *School House Rock*." GOOOD description! Imagine the keyboards and guts from the Shemps meeting up with F.Y.P. on the first day of high school after not having seen one another since elementary school! Xylophone included. This CD is the shit, my friend, especially if you know who the Shemps

and F.Y.P. are. "Scoliosis" is one of the funnest songs I've ever heard. Ever. And the skits in between the songs are just hilarious! —Mr. Z (Whoa Oh)

#### LOVED ONES, THE:

##### Build and Burn: CD

I've had this album for at least two months, and I'm still having trouble reviewing it. There's something that bothers me a bit about it, but I'm not sure why. The Loved Ones want to take their tightly honed poppy punk in a bit of an Americana/Springsteen direction, but not really. There are some slower jams that fail to evoke much sympathy from me, and some slightly bluesy stuff, including a song where the only lyrics are, "They're poundin' nails in Louisiana, they're poundin' nails." Okay, but what's the point? The anecdotal pop punk songs do a bit more for me, but not enough to really justify themselves. I dug their first record, so maybe next time. —Nick Toerner (Fat)

#### LUDICRA: Self-titled: 12"

I'm amazed at the movement that crust music has made in the last several years toward being lighter and fluffier. It used to be that crust records were easily distinguished by their black and white covers featuring bull skulls, vulture skulls, or maybe snapshots from war-torn or impoverished lands. The music tended to be so thick and impenetrable that you could hardly decipher the bass from the guitar as they jammed their fists into your guts. But now we get bands like Ludicra with their fancy full

color (although still very bleak) covers and their beautiful guitar solos and choruses with clean vocals. Maybe this isn't crust at all. Maybe it's that stuff that crust always seemed like it was trying to be. What was that called? Oh yeah... Metal. —MP Johnson (Life Is Abuse)

#### LUXURY PUSHERS:

##### Welcome to the Party, Traitor: CD

Glammed-up, hard-rockin' punk from Ohio, the musical breadbasket of America. Revivalist New York, 1970s-era punk replete with yowling sneers, a crashing rhythm section, and reverb-heavy guitars. —Jessica T (Zodiac Killer)

#### MAHARAJAS, THE: In Pure Spite: CD

I don't often hear good old-style garagey rock'n'roll coming out of Sweden, but The Maharajas have got it going on and then some. I guess I would liken this to the Oblivians meets the Woggles. As far as how they engage in the genre, this is pretty much straightforward and standard in all the positive senses of such words. You know what you're getting into with this one, but it does not disappoint at all. Infectious grooves but light and springy with an occasional touch of heaviness, like a pineapple upside down cake. There really isn't much to say about this in the end since, musically, it's rather familiar, but it's a welcome offering of such stylings. Good stuff, men. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Low Impact)

#### MAKEOUTS, THE: Worst Band Ever: 7"

The Makeouts produce lo-fi pop punk that wears its standard issue "heart imagery" and amateur style on the sleeve of its ratty Ramones shirt. Yet, even with the short and sweet nature that the 7" demands, the music can become pretty pedestrian awfully fast. The band devises one decent hook and then runs it through a dozen rounds of repetition without adding any other ingredient to it. It doesn't help that the playing comes off as pretty slack, which, in turn, guarantees that those initially cool hooks have nowhere to go. The muddy, clattering guitars and clanging drums would probably make this fun material for intoxicated dancing in a live setting, but in recorded form, it's only almost passable. —Reyan (Bachelor)

#### MALA SANGRE: Ride the Wind...: 7"

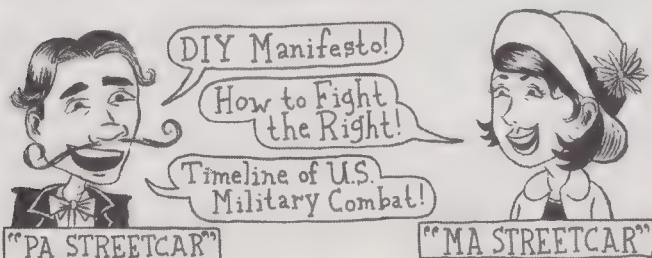
I can sum this up as what a kid in with an Amebix back patch on his jacket would go to if he was looking for a metal record. My interest in this style is pretty limited to a few bands, but this is an example of something that I have no trouble passing over. The lyrics and guitar riffs aren't too much different from those heard on the records of bands that came before Mala Sangre ("Bad Blood," translated), and ultimately leave something to be desired. If you think that this is your thing, then you may want to check it out for yourself, but as far as my tastes go, I can't find a reason to put this on again. —Dave Dillon (Threat To Existence)

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### MANIKIN: *M Theory*: 7"EP

Icy, dark, brooding, Orwellian, minimal, and existential: doesn't sound like a good time, does it? But Manikin somehow make all that danceable, terse, and interesting with a guitar that sounds like a blade being sharpened. Taking cues from Wire and Gang Of Four—and in league with The Fuses and The Lost Sounds (RIP)—this three-songer is a like an ice cube slowly pulled down the length of your spine, a great episode of *The Twilight Zone*, and a hint of the Tijuana Brass (cyborg division) all colliding together on a frozen patch of musical highway, giving the songs a distinctive, jagged, blood-in-your-mouth tang. —Todd (Super Secret)

### MASSHYSYTERI: Self-titled: 7"

As I imagine everyone on the planet was, I was completely bummed out when I heard that The Vicious had called it a day. Their final *Igen 7"* had been in constant rotation since it came out and their other records rarely made it back onto the shelf. After pacing around my apartment, heartbrokenly singing "Dead Town" to myself for what seemed like an eternity (but was actually more like twenty minutes), I received the word that there was indeed a new post-Vicious band in the works and that they'd taken their name from The Vicious' finest song. When I finally heard the *Masshyteri 7"*, it was as if my old friends had never gone away and that they'd been listening to a ton of Gorilla Anghel in their brief absence. If you liked The Vicious,

which I know you did, you will like this. It's like, the best. —Dave Williams (Feral Ward, [www.feralward.com](http://www.feralward.com))

### MEASURE [SA], THE / BLOTTO: Split 7"

If you've read and listened half-assedly to *Razorcake* over the past couple of years, just the *listing* of this 7" should prompt you to seek this little slab of gold out, regardless of what I make up right after this sentence. The Measure [SA]: The lead song, "No Regerts" (intentionally misspelled), is the shot: self-doubt, scene-doubt, and life-doubt becomes a swelling anti-anthem. It's one of those smile/cry songs where the protagonist is on the "cynical and jaded?" vs. "lifetime devotee-on-my-own-terms" fulcrum points in life. I hear celebration... You could call 'em pop punk and it wouldn't be wrong, but it wouldn't be right, either, because that wipes out their biggest weapon: heart. Blotto: Man, if I was smart, I'd know who the Frankie Stubbs of Japan was, what Japanese town would be the Minneapolis basement equivalent, and I could totally make a "this type of sushi is from the best part of this fish; it's delicious" reference to explain how Blotto's songs fuckin' rule by how they don't wank, aren't fatty, and cut through the international dateline like a sharp knife. But I'm not so smart. I'm just glad that Blotto's on board. —Todd (Snuffy Smiles)

### METH TEETH: *Meth Teeth*: 7"

Sweet rotisseried baby! This is a dark and deeply disturbing record.

It opens with "Bus Rides," a frenetic onslaught reminiscent of The Tyrades. "Unemployment Forever" is more subdued but poleaxes you with its darkness. The song is punctuated by an open bass note that resonates out of the void and stabs you in the brain. It's a hellish sound, like a cow on the slaughterhouse floor. It makes you remember why warriors blew into conch shells or beat on goat skin drums before an attack: it makes the enemy shit their pants and wish they were dead. The second side is a bit mellower, a cross between Morphine without the jazz syncopation and Bryan Ferry all looped out on Oxycontin. Get this record if you dare, but do yourself a favor and search for them through their label or pictures of seriously fucked up teeth are going to pop up in your search engine. Unnerving. —Jim Ruland (Sweet Rot)

### MOB, THE: *May Inspire Revolutionary Acts*: CD

I was excited to get this as I had no idea this CD was released! I love the Mob! But then I played the CD and was so disappointed by the sound quality that I couldn't bring myself to listen to every song all the way through. These songs should have stayed where they were in the dustbin, as they do no justice to the band. —Mr. Z (Overground)

### MOHORAM ATTA:

#### *Desolate, Motherfuckers*: 7"

Four songs of crusty hardcore punk. Super dark, super heavy with multiple

vocalists and three guitarists! Fans of From Ashes Rise, His Hero Is Gone, and all-out raging will not be disappointed by this, unless they're a total snob and like to complain about everything, but even then they might have a hard time with this 7". —Daryl (Unholy Thrash)

### MOJOMATICS, THE: *"Down My Spine" b/w "The Diamond Jack"*: 7"

Two-man-band from Venice, Italy, whose vocals sound like the lead singer from Randy (which is odd, due to Randy being from Sweden and both bands singing in English). My favorite Mojomatics song—"Nothing about Nothing"—crystallized my fandom for these guys a couple years back. That *Alien Snatch 7"* was a raucous mix of cracked-apart Beatles melodies that were linked to Hasil Adkins jittering that still shakes my bones. Since then, the Mojomatics have taken off the crazy hat and have dived into the world of Lennon/McCartney/Brian Wilson head first with straight-ahead, big-sounding, expertly produced, beautiful songs. Tell me if this makes sense. If I hadn't heard their earlier stuff, I wouldn't give this much of a chance, but since I know where it's coming from, I like it. I can sit back and let the prettiness wash over me like a sunset. (Since the label that's releasing this is named after a Beach Boys album, that'll give you more of a sonic idea where this is coming from.) —Todd (Wild Honey, [myspace.com/wildhoneyrec](http://myspace.com/wildhoneyrec))

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**MOUTHBREATH: Self-titled: 7"**

Now this is cool: clear emerald green vinyl in a matching green tri-fold cover. Since this was recorded with Chris Owens (Lords, Coliseum), I was a little disappointed this only had two songs. The first track is new from this Richmond, Virginia, hardcore outfit followed up by the rerecorded "Forgainst the Kids" with its power chord riff and group vocals. Recommended. -Kristen K (Kiss of Death/Tick Tock)

**NEW BRUISES / STOLEN BIKES RIDE FASTER: Split: 7"**

I thought that the first New Bruises LP, *Transmit! Transmit!*, was a decent outing peppered with some really good tracks ("Homo-Erectus-Americanus" still finds its way onto mixes I make a few years after I've heard it). That said, they've released a few 7"s since then, including this one, and they now strike me as a band that's entirely coming into their own. With vocals somewhere between singing and screaming and toe-tappable bursts of guitar hooks laid over an on-point rhythm section, it all merges to form some serious rock. Interestingly, it's rock that eschews much of the gruff-vocalled beard-blasts that seems so synonymous with the Tampa/Gainesville area right now. I mean, I really like a lot of that stuff, but the bullets New Bruises are firing are from a different gun entirely, and that's refreshing. Stolen Bikes Ride Faster is from Italy and seem to be

a pretty good record-mate; musically they're pretty similar, though they seem to be more relentless and unwilling to take the song down a notch for some instrumental interplay. The only bummer about Stolen Bikes (and this is the first time I've heard 'em, so I don't know if it's a studio thing that they do all the time or what) but either the vocalist double-tracked his stuff or they turned the reverb way up in the mix; the end result is that he sounds A) somewhat operatic and B) totally independent of the band. It's a little distracting. As a whole, though, the record's pretty good; two tracks each by two bands that seem to be slogging their way towards sloughing off their influences and finding themselves in a house that they're building themselves. Nice attack. -Keith Rosson (Kiss Of Death)

**NINE POUND HAMMER:****Sex, Drugs, & Bill Monroe: CD**

The pre-Nashville Pussy spin-off you knew and didn't love in the 1990s is back with their second comeback album in recent years. I went into this one with a bad attitude, but it's actually a way above average cowpunk album that I found myself bobbing to like a fool. Nine Pound Hammer is no Hellstomper and this still pales in comparison to Nashville Pussy, but fans could do a lot worse than checking out this saucy CD. -Art Ettinger (Acetate)

**O PIONEERS!!! / THE MEASURE [SA]: Split 7"**

Cohesion in split records: Who needs it? On the OP!!! side, you've got a cover featuring a cartoon of a cheeky musclemans in a leopard-print Speedo posing with a "gator dawg" in hand and a tiny mutt taking a leak on his foot. Uh...okay. The band's lone contribution to the disc is a harmoniously jangly confessional delivered with Chuck Ragan-esque gravelly vocals, cloaked in the awesomely raw production of an early-'90s emo record. Mildly catchy, but it doesn't cut through you as it should. Flip the green parcel over and you'll find a stately portrait of the late Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (with newsprint for skin) questioning your soul. The Measure [sa] offer two tracks of plucky pop punk with a sweet slow dance interlude wedged in the middle. Again, there's some good moments (like the nostalgic bridge in the third track), but nothing particularly memorable as a whole. Together, this tag team of young bands produces a fun yet artistically uncoordinated and largely ineffective teaser of how great their music *could* be. -Reyan (Kiss of Death)

**PANDAMONIUM: Self-titled: 7"**

The first thing you'll notice when you pick this one up is the cover, which features the angriest fucking panda you will ever see in your life standing tall on top of a mound of charred corpses. With its fangs bared, it aims its blowtorch at any body that shows signs of life, sucking in the scent of burning flesh

with pride. Like the panda on the cover, the music on this record is relentless. It's frantic hardcore that knows that if it doesn't keep moving, it very may well become another addition to that pile of bodies. In other words, this is the stuff that keeps the pit alive. (By the way, the cover art is by Bill Hauser, who did a couple covers for my zine, *Freak Tension*, back in the day and, as far as I'm concerned, is at the top of the heap of hardcore cover/poster artists at the moment. Check it.) -MP Johnson (One Percent)

**PEELANDER-Z / BIRTHDAY SUITS: Split: 7"**

Fun, fun, fun. Two noisy, chaotic, and spazzy tracks by two Japanese ex-pat bands living in America, soaking in a light-hearted darkness. Peelanders-Z: The weird thing about these dudes? No, not that they're comic book characters or the "from another planet" thing, but a good portion of their songs seem to begin in the middle and end where you'd usually start a song. If the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers had no special powers and Gummi Bear mouths (they could just gum you fiercely but look athletic doing it)... Birthday Suits: sound nothing like the following bands, but would fit perfectly on the bill: Scratch Acid, Shark Pants, The Causey Way, Japanther. When I say arty and noisy in this context, it's not code for "shitty," but tension and release, big-ass dynamics, a wall-of-sound that sounds much bigger than two humble dudes. Neat, neat, neat. -Todd (Crustacean)

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### PERIOD THREE: Self-titled: 7"

The four tracks found here lean towards pop punk, but they aren't too poppy or too snotty—somewhere between Lefty Loosie and Stun Gun's "T.V. Tan" (without SG's guitar soloing). The muddy recording almost makes it seem like the band lacks severe energy (they don't), but it actually compliments Period Three quite nicely. It's like the band is at the end of the rope, too tired from all the frustration and disappointment. It's as though they've tried everything else to find any sort of solace, and this is their last effort to find it. The vocals never cease to be anything but grave. The music has a melody doing its damndest to stay upbeat. These parts combine to create a dynamic that gives the songs a charm that is comforting in its ostensible despondency. *En somme*, it's really catchy and really good. —Vincent (DNH)

### PRESS CORPS:

#### Urban Truth Rural Myth: CD

Seattle band made up of members of Mudhoney, The Fluid, and Mother Love Bone. The music is heavy rock with melodic leanings. There is an indie rock feel to it, but it still sounds very much like the past bands in other parts. —Mike Frame (Flotation)

### PRESS, THE: *The Complete Press—1984-1994*: CD

I've got to admit that, although I do consider myself a fan of "oi" punk (though the reviews I write may not always reflect that), I've never heard The Press. I've been missing out for a

lot of years! As the title states, this is a retrospective disc, and right from the start, it rocks in the same vein as Cock Sparrer, Sham, and the like. Simple and catchy, I found myself humming and singing along almost instantly. Even the obligatory ska track is good! I have no idea if their claim of being "America's first Oi band" is true or not, but they're great and it's easy to see how they'd be influential on plenty of today's bands. —Ty Stranglehold (Insurgence)

### PSYCHO-PATH:

#### The Ass-Soul of Psycho-Path: CD

The front cover is a naked woman on her stomach, shown from the side from her upper back on down. She's tied up in rope, causing her feet to come back towards her butt. She also has a tattoo on her right hip, black stiletto heels on her feet, and a knife shoved up her ass. And there is a pool of blood coming from underneath her. I'm really at a loss as to what else to say that might be of any interest after that description. Beyond that cover, though, the packaging is really nice, with good color photos in a glossy, two paneled booklet. As for the sound, it really doesn't live up to anything you might expect based on the front cover. Sultry, sexy female vocals (à la Amy Adoyzie) front a band sounding a lot like Girls Against Boys with songs ranging from three to eleven minutes. They're perfectly fine; I just can't help but feel as though after witnessing the results of an ass-raping with a knife displayed on the front cover, everything else about the band seems "meh." —Kurt Morris (Moonlee)

### PTERODACDUDES / SHRED SAVAGE: Self-titled: Split: 7"

Those are some great band names, and fitting ones, too. The Pterodactyls play a sort of prehistoric-sounding hardcore with little breaks for musical goofing around. Shred Savage are snotty and, at least in their first tune, squeeze in some raw guitar shredding. If you want to do the dino-mosh, this is probably the record to do it to. —MP Johnson (Small Pool)

### PUMPERS, THE: *Untitled: 7"*

I must admit that my expectations for this disc were quite low before I actually listened to the disc. A silly band name, bland cover "art" (the eyes of the four band members cut out of their faces over a black background, with the rest of the snapshot on the other side), and trite track titles (hasn't "Let Go" already been used a dozen times before, including as an Avril Lavigne album?) do not produce much potential for success. However, I was pleasantly surprised once the needle met the grooves: discordant and raw garage punk with mangy vocals that appears to have been recorded five feet away from the equipment in an echoing room. This means that the band has to play as loudly and energetically as possible to compensate for the physical gap between the band and the equipment. Aside from the background caterwauling that sounds like a frantic siren, there are also a few hints of surf rock here and there in the songs. Those minor flourishes are enough to separate this work from similar sounding efforts. Plus, extra points for the brown vinyl of

my copy, which has the finish of a classy coffee table. It makes me want to invest in a nice lamp and some oversized art books. —Reyan (Wallride)

### RETICENTS, THE: Self-titled: EP CD-R

Five-song street punk blast from this Baltimore, MD, band. If you like your punk raw and in your face, this is the band for you. "Gainer" and "World of Extremes" had me hitting the repeat button. But now that the band has new recruit Shaffer (ex-Porch Mob) on bass, look for a splinter producing debut to come. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

### REVEREND BEAT-MAN: *Surreal Folk Blues Gospel Trash Vol 2*: CD

The album title can't explain it any better, unless it added the words, "Transferred from Analog Recording from 2008." The Rev knows what he likes, he knows how to do it, and he kicks ass at it. The IT is swampy, one-man band (with occasional bluegrass friends) folk rock. Sometimes peppy and rambunctious, sometime moody and lumbering. Always dillier. It's good to have staples to depend on. Reverend Beat-Man is the mashed potatoes of trash. —Speedway Randy (Voodoo Rhythm, [www.voodooorhythm.com](http://www.voodooorhythm.com))

### RHINO-39: Self-titled: 2 x CD

This has what must be everything Rhino-39 released from 1979 through 1986. To me, Rhino-39 is a "flyer punk" band. That means they're one of those bands that I see on a lot of old flyers, but never really heard anything about them or any

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of their songs. The Alley Kats, China White, Suburban Lawns, and Castration Squad are some other names that fall into that category just off the top of my head. Having finally heard Rhino-39, I can't say I feel like I missed out on too much. They're not bad, but with these "before my time bands," I feel like there are several categories. There are the bands that are just flat-out essential, which includes a lot of the usual suspects like Black Flag, The Weirdos, and The Dickies. Next, there are those bands and albums which I need to take a little time to get to know, but once I do I love them. For instance, it took me a couple of listens to "get it," but I really like The Plugz *Better Luck* now. Then there's the third category of bands which aren't bad, but don't feel particularly amazing or revelatory either. Basically, they're a real "you had to be there" type thing to appreciate, and that's how I feel about this collection. It's decent enough pre-hardcore L.A. punk, but it never really gets me going like stuff from bands like The Urinals or The Germs or The Last does. Also, there are four different versions of the song "I. Alfred," which is overkill for what is, at best, a forgettable song. This compilation of Rhino-39's stuff feels like more of a mildly interesting curiosity for punk historians and completists, rather than some lost Holy Grail of Los Angeles punk. —Adrian (Nickel and Dime)

#### RISE UP HOWLIN' WEREWOLF:

*The Indian Curse Will Bring You Back to Me: 7"*

I'm old enough to remember past

last year. In many the same ways that folk and punk are in a group hug right now, in the late nineties and early zeros, punk and the blues (via Estrus and Crypt Records among other fine purveyors) were squaloring and swapping whiskey flasks. Some of the best shit came from the South: The Wednesdays, Quadrajets, Immortal Lee County Killers, Porch Ghouls. Rise Up Howlin' Werewolf play two cigarette-burning to-the-filter slow rollers that are cinematically pristine, like you can see the badasses filling the dimly lit bar with smoke by a long fuse to a bomb about to explode. That's the good sort of tension, my friends. Silk-screened and spray painted covers. —Todd (Arkam)

#### RIVER CITY TANLINES:

*Modern Friction: 7"*

More rock from the Tanlines, who are consistently good, but this feels a level lower than previous 45s. Alicja's most straight project, less moody than Lost Sounds and not as punk as the Fitts—this will still get ya going, but try an earlier single if you need an introduction to the group. —Speedway Randy (Savage, [www.savagemagazine.com](http://www.savagemagazine.com))

#### RÖSVETT: *Sorgedödaren: CD*

Scandinavian hardcore here, as one might've guessed by the title. Not quite as crucial, frenzied, or sick with Discharge influences as many of their peers, but this does the job well enough. —Jimmy Alvarado (Six Weeks)

#### RUINING, THE:

*This Is an Ambush: CDEP*

This is the first release from a fairly new band from Trenton, NJ. If you're from that area, you may remember a band that based their sound off of the '90s Lookout! Records catalog called The Checkers. Well, this band exhibits the progression of the musical tastes and abilities of Nick, Andy (who goes by "Ace" in this band), and Matt from The Checkers. The three songs on this possess a sound akin to Hot Water Music and Latterman. There's an ever-increasing number of bands doing this sort of thing nowadays, but this is, without a doubt, towards the top of the pile. I'll definitely be keeping an eye out for more releases from these guys. —Dave Dillon (Self-released)

#### SATELLITERS, THE:

*Where Do We Go?: CD*

Fuck, this is surprisingly good. I was really ready to slaughter this record. I typically really hate neo-'60s folk-rock/psychedelic bands. They're usually unimaginative, affecting a style of music that died nearly forty years ago. But The Satellites have a lot going for them: a singer who can sing, great musicianship, and a considerable knowledge of mid '60s rock'n'roll (Love, early Byrds, Kinks, etc.). I mean, a lot of the Satellites' shit is directly stolen from Kingsmen records (dubbing crowd noises on a studio LP) and Byrds albums (guitar effects taken from *Notorious Byrd Brothers*); and I'm sure the Satellites

are quite proud of it. So, while the Satelliters are not raising the bar on garage revival (like Greg Cartwright), they're certainly fun and "authentic" enough to throw onto your turntable. —Ryan Leach (Dionysus)

#### SCIENTISTS: *Swampland: CD*

To totally jack the always quotable Mr. Jake Smith, America has room for only two Australian rock bands, AC/DC and Air Supply, which leaves quite a few bands truly worthy of some attention sorely lacking any. Such is the case with the Scientists. Hailing from the land of Bon Scott and the Hard-Ons, these guys sound like the missing link between the primal punk of the Saints and the psychosis of the Birthday Party, but also manage to throw a wrench in the gears by distilling the rockabilly out of the Cramps to get at their best, most minimal essence. This is some really good stuff here, stuff that should be played loud and often, and yet at the same time, it's something that the corporate formats calling themselves "indie" anymore would never drop into regular rotation. Stupid Americans. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cherry Red)

#### SERIOUS GENIUSES, THE / JEAN CLAUDE JAM BAND: *Split: 7"*

A screen printed cover. Lyrics and artwork on a fancy screen printed card. Nice. Punk'n'rollers JCJB represent with two songs off their 2006 demo: "Two Dollar Headache" and "Rattlesnake Love." Of these two Massachusetts bands, I gravitated toward the Geniuses.

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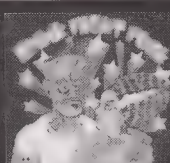
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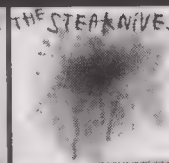
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trash scene, and all the best facets possible. Swings from great echoes of the past like The Monks, Jonathan Richman, and girl groups, feels fond of later greats The Fells and The Gories, while not sounding like a '60s karaoke rip off. No, you will pop up and down to this pureness and cry because it seems so simple to be so good the way seeing a band in someone's house is a thousand times stronger than going to a thousand-person club with stage lighting. Leave it to In The Red to unleash another new band on the U.S. that gives you faith in rock. LP doesn't have liner notes, but does have a CD inside. -Speedway Randy (In The Red)

#### SOULSHAKE EXPRESS, THE: Self-titled: CD

Fuck! "Can you feel it?! CAN YOU FEEL IT?!" "NO!" This shit is as whack as Wolfmother. Motherfuckers just ripping the shit out of Hendrix and the MC5... wearing their hair long... playing Rickenbackers and hollow body guitars. Man, it's like all these fools I know who think that drinking alone will get you writing like Raymond Chandler or Hunter S. Thompson.... These guys have the imaginations of a rock. -Ryan Leach (Beatville, www.beatville.com)

#### SOULSHAKE EXPRESS, THE: Heavy Music: CD

See above review. Formulaic, late-'60s garage shit from some dudes who refuse to give it up. Donate your instruments to charity. -Ryan Leach (Beatville, www.beatville.com)

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**SPEAR OF DESTINY: *One Eyed Jacks*: CD**  
**SPEAR OF DESTINY: *World Service*: CD**  
Sometimes listening to a band's recorded output in one sitting is like reading a Dickens novel, in that you hear their earliest—and usually happiest—period, followed by their brush with fame and its corrupting influence, which of course leads to their inevitable downfall. SOD's first here, *Grapes of Wrath*, is easily the most interesting of the three: less aggressive and angry than previous bands some members had staffed, specifically The Pack (whose "St. Teresa" remains a great song, but I digress) and the always swell Theatre of Hate, yet still retaining the post-punk fascination with tribal rhythms and adding an almost disembodied saxophone, a singer with a strong, rich voice, and even some gospel tinges around the edges. By the middle of the tale, however, more obvious pop overtures had begun to creep in, which led them to a bonafide hit song and, no doubt, all that it brings. *One Eyed Jacks* is not a bad album, and it even is singled as the band's best by their fans. As history has shown repeatedly, any intentional pandering to the mainstream carries a heavy price, and by their final album, *World Service*, they were in a full-blown '80s British pop morass, sucking six ways from Sunday. By the end of the last note on the last album, you're looking around, wondering where that crazy old lady in the flambe-style wedding dress popped off to and why she didn't take the band with her. -Jimmy Alvarado (Cherry Red)

**STAKES, THE: *Real Tigers*: CD**  
Sporty straight-edgy stuff with two vocalists yelling in sort-of harmony. My wife hates this shit. Some days I do, too, but, for the most part, I'm okay with this record since I haven't been drinking much of late and I can finally understand the need for all the yelling in straight edge music: yelling till yer face turns purple takes away the desire for a drink. Still, the Stakes' focus seems to be kind of like a former smoker policing his friends' smoking. And I'm pretty much done with titles like "Benchwarmers" and "Victory" and lyrics such as "wake up/stand hard." Pfft. In the end, this is a lot more like drinking a creatine milkshake of music than rocking out in any significant way; but there are times when such puffery and power are welcome. -The Lord Kveldulfr (High Fidelity)

**STARK RAVING MAD: *Amerika*: CD**  
Long has it been since I heard these guys—so long, in fact, that I'd completely forgotten what they sound like. You get two albums' worth of stuff here for your buck, their self-titled debut and the *Amerika* LP, both of which feature fine thrashy hardcore and vocals that fall somewhere between Jello Biafra and Rodney Anonymous from the Dead Milkmen. Songs are nice 'n' short and have the requisite spazz quality, and the only major complaint is that the spaces between the tunes—we're talking some ten to twelve seconds here—are way too goddamn long. Outside of that, it was

good hearing these kids again. -Jimmy Alvarado (Just For Fun)

#### STATUES: *Same Bodies, Same Faces*: 7"

This band's last record, 2006's *New People Make Us Nervous*, left me completely speechless. I hadn't heard a knack for combining near-perfect pop songs and goose bump-inducing lyrics since hearing "The Science of Myth" for the first time. It was upsettingly good. The *Same Bodies, Same Faces* 7" continues in the same vein, just oozing catchiness and sincerity. Folks are quick to make Buzzcocks comparisons or plaster on the power pop label whenever a pop punk band doesn't reek of Ramones influence, but I really think that Statues rises above the completely obvious. With a once-over, one can find elements of all of the above stuff in Statues' sound, but there's just something indescribable going on here; something that gives me the shivers. I'm hard-pressed to think of a current band that I like more. Incredible. -Dave Williams (Deranged)

#### STATUES: *Same Bodies, Same Faces*: 7"EP

I'm sure these guys are sick of the Tranzmitors comparison because they're Canadian, pour their hearts out into power pop, have releases on the same label, and, basically, kick a ton of ass, but we go with what we've got. Lyrically, this comes across like the movie *Brazil* and the black sheep bolting in the opposite direction of the

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flock on the cover of Minor Threat's *Out of Step*. Work suuuuucks people into fluorescent-tinged, lock-step, grey-raced bean pushers. Music's a beautiful fuckin' rainbow in the darkness. And if a band holds up Elvis Costello in a chalice to make your butt shake, more the better. They make the GG Allin cover sound like it was originally released by The Jam. I'm a goddamn sucker for this stuff. —Todd (Deranged)

#### STEINWAYS, THE: *Unoriginal Recipe: EP*

This 'til EP is leaps and bounds ahead of the band's debut CD. The songs are more complex and layered and, quite frankly, catchier. Wow...what a punch. I'm real bummed though. Why, you ask? This EP came to me as CD-only. The 7" and all of its re-presses sold out the day they arrived from the plant. Nothing but evidence. This band will be huge in zee pop punk world. —Mr. Z (It's Alive)

**STEVIE TOMBSTONE: *Devil's Game: CD***  
A man sings melancholy country rock songs, accompanied by his guitar. Not a bad thing... if you're Steve Earle. —Jessica T (Sautext)

**STOCKYARD STOICS/THE FILAMENTS: *The Special Relationship E.P.: Split: 7"***  
The press release for this claims it's all "no bullshit DIY punk rock." No argument there. This is good, good stuff. The Stockyard Stoics are certainly more street punk oriented, but it's not the hyper-aggressive, meathead type stuff; their offerings are earnest yet thoughtful

and, musically, the band is muscular and powerful but still catchy. The Filaments have more of a classic hardcore sound to them, but there are moments at which the ska monster tastefully rears its fun-loving head. They remind me a lot of Snuff. The songs are fast, tight, and anthemic. All in all, this is a great little package: six tunes that got me reinvigorated and sent me bouncing down the street. It comes with a sticker and a mini-zine, too. Recommended. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Fistolo)

**STRAIT A'S, THE: *Detention Span: 7"***  
I'm pretty glad that I listened to this, considering the fact that I really didn't want to because of the one sheet. It made mention of the current drummer (the band's ninth) also playing with a pretty big indie hip-hop group. The thought alone of combining rap and punk makes me cringe. Punk and hip-hop are not like sodium and chloride. They aren't poisonous on their own, and they don't make a season enjoyed by almost everyone when merged together. That is, never write anything on a one sheet that may be taken as an insinuation that they are mixed unless it's true, in which case it would be shameful to withhold such information. (However, it is okay to mention that one of the old drummers plays in Sass Dragons and that the female vocalist is in the God Damn Doo Wop Band.) Anyway, the Strait A's don't make punk rap; they make pop punk. Damn fine pop punk, in fact. It really reminds me of the Teen Idols, but with a bit of the sloppiness and attitude

prevalent in early '90s Queers' albums (one track reminds me of "Ursula" musically). There are both male and female vocals, but the female vox only take the lead on one track. Overall, the band's moniker is pretty damn right on. —Vincent (Johann's Face)

**STRANGER, THE: *Prison Called Life: 7"***  
A serendipitous collage of rock, garage, rockabilly, blues, punk, and more influences that resonate with me. The hard-rockin Prison Called Life backed with the dirgeful Missing Link and a great mused-up version of Nick Cave's "Thirsty Dog." Pick this up for "Thirsty Dog." Then do yourself a favor and pick up their self-titled CD. The band's influences are given their proper due, like New Bomb Turks, Rev. HH, Gun Club, Smiths, Amazing Crowns, Thin Lizzy, and Nick Cave, as well as classic R&B and country artists. Think SWIG, Black Keys, Girl Trouble, Gas Huffer, et al. It'll make you shaky, achy, and fevered. —Jessica T (Haunted Town)

**SUBWASTE / TOMMY GUSTAFSSON AND THE IDIOTS: *Split: CD***  
Wow, total sleeper hit of this issue. Wasn't expecting much at all from this, and then both bands just blew me away. Terrific stuff: catchy and anthemic. Owing heavy nods to their fellow countrymen in Bombshell Rocks and Smalltown, every song is so goddamn bright and hook-laden, I was singing along by the second time I ran through this, and that's saying something. Using the framework and template of, say, the

first few Stiff Little Fingers records but updating and modernizing it; goddamn, what's not to like, right? Subwaste's the more jagged of the two, if only because of the fact that the vocalist's got that extra ounce of snarl in his pipes. TG&TI are swimming through similar (rad) waters, but they've got a very slight rock/rockabilly thread buoying up their end of things. It's albums like this, ones that totally come out of left field, that make me so stoked to review for you 'Cake. —Keith Rosson (Warbird)

#### SUNGLASSES AFTER DARK: *Self-titled: CD*

This is a nearly complete discography from an ultra obscure U.K. goth band circa 1983. Discs like this make me happy. I like knowing there are people out there doing their best to make sure awesome music like this doesn't disappear. It's reckless, wild goth with touches of rockabilly. There's an impending sense of dread in the screaming guitars and off-kilter vocals, but a kind of fun dread, like when you're being chased by a zombie and you know that your life might end, but you just made out with a super hot girl so you still feel like things are going okay for you. You figure there's really no better time to have your brains eaten. —MP Johnson (Cherry Red)

**SUNSET RIDERS: *Self-titled: 7"***  
There are essentially two different types of straight edge songs. The first type is all about how positive and how important the good ol' X has been to the songwriter.

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The second type is the rant about how someone else sucks because they either aren't straight edge or they have turned their back on their edge beliefs. I'm all about the first type, but the second type can get a little tedious. Sunset Riders play some nice moshable hardcore, but throw in one of those type two edge songs. Even worse, it's not about an old edger getting drunk or crunk or skunk, it's about a straight edge friend neglecting the third X. What's the third X? Well, let's count 'em down. Minor Threat style: "Don't smoke/Don't drink/Don't fuck/At least I can fuckin' think!" So the third X must be fucking. Sure enough, the lyrics go on to detail how someone found a new girl and the edge went out of sight, thus all the words they lived by turned out to be a fucking lie... Well, either that or the dude was horny. Cut him some slack, bro. —MP Johnson (Suburban Waste)

#### TAGGART: *Pink Pig Stink*: CD

Subtitled "10 Years of Taggart Covers, Demos and Z-Sides: 1997-2007," this is a whopping twenty-four song collection from this Philly band. The band's originals stand proud next to covers of The Who and The Replacements. Noisy, frenzied, and full tilt, there's not a wilting flower in the bunch. "Deep End" is a great song, but I'm sure you'll find a lot more on here that will have you knocking your stereo speakers over. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

#### TEENAGE COOL KIDS: *Queer Salutations*: CD

I'm liking this album. It has that

raggedy, almost sloppy (but not quite), slacker punk feel like Pavement's *Slanted and Enchanted* or Dinosaur Jr's. *You're Living All Over Me*. Lyrically and musically, this is a lot more straight forward than either of those two albums, but it's fun to listen to when in a mellower mood. That's not to say that this is a slow and ethereal shoegaze, but this isn't exactly going to satisfy anyone's need for a hardcore fix. I especially like the lyrics to "Write Back Soon" and its great line directed at hipsters: "'Hold my Pabst?' Kiss my ass. Move to Brooklyn or Vermont." This album is worth picking up, and ironically enough, I think this has enough of an indie rock appeal that hipsters would probably actually dig it. —Adrian (Protagonist Music)

#### TERRIBLE TWOS: *Radical Tadpoles*: 7"

Screamy punk with keyboards, playing with total urgency. A little bit Lost Sounds, a little bit late Black Flag; gravely vocals, great shit. Some of the songs feel like they are slowing down to end and then ramp back up. I imagine they are furious live. I already ordered their new full-length... —Speedway Randy (X!, x-recordings.com)

#### TERRIBLE TWOS: *Self-titled*: CD

Either it's a big month for noise releases or I just happened to luck out by randomly picking the lion's share of the stuff out of the piles. Spastic, all-over-the-place noise rock here that's, in a word, glorious. The guys responsible come from a few other like-minded bands prior—none of which

I can remember off the top of my head right now—but all in all, this ain't a bad bit of bombast. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.x-recs.com)

#### THE SILVER MT. ZION MEMORIAL ORCHESTRA AND TRA-LA-LA BAND: *13 Blues for Thirteen Moons*: CD

There's an account of a Bukowski reading somewhere where some fan shouts from the audience, "Give us more blood!" There's a lot more blood than I was expecting in this newest Silver Mt. Zion project. While I figured they'd follow their powerful-but-mournful *Horses in the Sky* with something more depressed and depressing, being gradually worn down by the evils of the world, the idealistic Montreal septet (a vocal offshoot of the legendary post-rock Godspeed You! Black Emperor) has instead dug deep into their entrails and tugged them out for all to see. This is their toughest, angriest recording ever, verging at times on—I shit you not—early Sabbath territory, musically, except with strings and passionate, punk-poetic lyrics: dig the repeated refrain of "I.E.D.—S.U.V.—M.P.3" during "1,000,000 Died to Make This Sound," which rages at the shallowness of our popular culture and media/public complicity in the Iraq conflict... or try "Blackout at the terror trials/ It's the sixth year of their wars/ I'm pacing shotgun hallways/ While my fucking neighbour snores." Whether you feel inspired and uplifted in your own angry indignation, or castigated in your apathy and meaningless contented consumerism, I guess depends

on you; I know that some folks find the hairshirt-and-flagellation quality to their politic a bit off-putting. Personally, I find it inspiring and nourishing, in a kind of dark way. More blood! Give us more blood! WE'RE HUNGRRRRRRRY... —Allan MacInnis (Constellation)

#### THINGS, THE:


##### *Wild Psychotic Sounds*: 12" EP

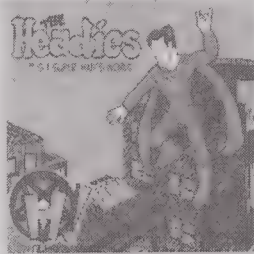
Ireland's The Things are gaining quite the reputation through putting out one kick-ass garage rock record after the other. This six-song colored vinyl 12" EP is even catchier than their prior material with a high danceability factor and near-perfect production. By the time this issue hits stands, collector assholes will have probably already bought these suckers up. So hit up the label or your hip local record store immediately if you want one of these. —Art Ettinger (Big Neck)

#### TODAY IS THE DAY: *Supernova*: CD


Holy hell, this is *intense*. It's a loveless wreck of commotion overlaid with gravel-throated, mostly unintelligible vocals that are equally likely to ravage the throat of the "singer" as they are the ears of the listener. While it does take a few forays into political commentary and offbeat industrial touches here and there, it always ends up going back to the spewing guitars and light speed drumming that ask you how fast you can slam your neck. By basic classification, it's *loud*, noisy, heavy metal, but this kind of simplification is unable to convey just how sincerely disturbed this is. Originally from 1993,

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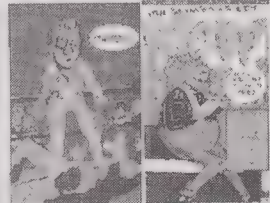




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**Supernova** is one in a series of TITD re-releases on their fresh label of the same name. Now, while the new version's slick packaging, lyric booklet (largely pointless) and retouched cover are all nice to have, how could anyone dare to consider remastering something that comes off as the soundtrack to an alien baby bursting out of its fetal pod to begin hunt for earth-flesh? Remastering should be reserved for bands who thrive on a cleaner, more accessible sound; let this fucker live to conquer in the way it originally appeared. —Reyan (Supernova)

#### TOTAL FURY/PANDAMONIUM: Split 7"

A tour 7" for a short East Coast tour that happened in September of 2007, which I have no recollection of ever hearing about. But that could be the old age and failing brain cells working against me. Total Fury: three in-your-face, fast punk jams from this early '80s East Coast-loving band from Japan. A cover is performed from a band called Second Wind, which I have never heard of. Not the best choice for a lead-off track, since their originals blew them away. I would have definitely put the cover as the last track. Pandamonium: Hailing from Minneapolis, these five ladies and a dude hold their own with their own brand of thrashing punk. Three songs that are raging, gritty, and fast. They also cover a Los Crudos song that is fitting to the style of music that they play. I wish this tour was on the West Coast. I would have definitely gone to one of the shows. —Donofthedeath (One Percent)

#### TRICLOPS!: Out of Africa: CD

This sounds exactly like The Mars Volta. I've never "got" the whole Mars Volta prog-rock trip. —Adrian (Alternative Tentacles)

#### TRUTHDEALER: Self-titled: 7"

This is the kind of slightly experimental Schlöng/Inbred type stuff that I normally give a mixed review to. But I like this one a lot, even though I don't really know why. It's sort of like the musical equivalent of the weighty and rewarding strain of pushing out a big turd. It sounds like it was recorded through a wool scarf—oppressive and warming while being pleasurably scratchy. There's something addictive to the sound that Truthdealer has; I found myself always slightly mesmerized by this record as if I were watching the Rhythmically Swaying Gorilla playing a cello with a two-by-four. —The Lord Kveldulfr (F&S)

#### UNSEEN FORCE:

##### In Search of the Truth: CD

Somewhere, Adam Bomb from the late, great "Final Countdown" radio show has just pooped his Underoos, and I'm inclined to join him. While together, Unseen Force managed to release one album that had a press run of, what, four copies, but what a doozy of an album it was. Full-bore yet highly catchy hardcore was their output, with the politically minded lyricism that was the order of the day in the '80s, this is one of the long-lost gems of the latter part of that decade that further adds to the proof

things didn't flatline by mid-decade like all them lame ass books say. Tacked on are some live tracks from a show at a California radio station (KXLU? KPFK? The liner notes don't say) and a demo from an earlier band that fed into Unseen Force, making for one truly crucial addition to the collection. Wow, I'd forgotten all about these guys, and a pox on me for doing so. —Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS:

##### A Tribute to Leatherface: CD

First off, tribute records blow sheep. What no doubt was a well intentioned way of honoring musical heroes has quickly turned into a way for sub-par bands to make a name and name bands to retain some sort of cred, resulting in people like KISS getting their names mixed up in a scene they probably once held in contempt. Further, to attempt to pay such a tribute to a band as revered and adored as Leatherface is tantamount to asking someone wearing steel-toed stiletto shoes dipped in boric acid to kick you repeatedly in the face. Let's face it, the band elicits a reverence akin to a religious fervor in some quarters, and said quarter won't take lightly to some quasi-tribute laying waste to their fine name. That said, this is actually quite good, so those responsible have probably averted the aforementioned stiletto shoed fate outline above, which has put a rather unpleasant image in my head and made me wish I'd not thought of it in the first place. I think what makes this one work is that they had the good sense to pick

two discs worth of bands from the heart of Leatherface's wing of fan(at)ics to do the tribute-paying—c'mon, it'd be crazy to have such a collection that didn't include Radon, The Tim Version, Hot Water Music, Wat Tyler, and Tiltwheel in the ranks—and you end up with a tribute that sometimes actually comes close to rivaling the original versions. Hell, kudos to In The Red for not only winning the "who can rasp their vocals like Stubbs" contest, but also for turning in a version of "Patrick Kills Me" that could easily pass for the original. There are a couple of odd missteps—okay, we got that the tunes sound just as well delivered acoustically around the third track delivered thus, and the sole excursion into synth-land was as bad as can be expected—but on the whole, this was pretty danged swell. —Jimmy Alvarado (Rubber Factory)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS: El Libertario: CD

As of late, there have been a very small percentage of compilations released that I actually like. This comp falls into that small percentage. A benefit CD for El Libertario, an anarchist collective and newspaper based out of Caracas, Venezuela. A whole slew of bands from around the world fill this disc. Thirty-one bands play thirty-two tracks of punk, crust, and even hip hop. Bands like Misery, Apatia No, Nuclear Death Terror, Bait, Remains Of The Day, Auktion, Iskra, Disrespect, Visions Of War, and Dios Hastio are some of the bands on this comp. Calavera from France was my shocker of a discovery. They (or he,



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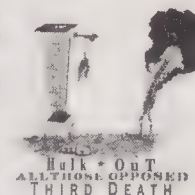
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I'm not sure) reminded me of a French Dr. Dre. The hip hop tracks mixed in well to keep things interesting. All the bands on this release seem to have contributed a top quality song as opposed to so many bad comps out there with leftover tracks or filler. Quality didn't stop at just the music. A well put together digipack package is also a feature. The cover inside and out has fantastic artwork by multiple artists and includes a huge booklet that is too big to be an insert. Don't know how available this release will be, but if you run across it, definitely snatch it up if any of the bands mentioned are in your league. —Donofthedeath (Fight For Your Mind)

#### VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Paid in Black—A Tribute to Johnny Cash*: CD

There are likely hundreds of Johnny Cash tributes available and I have reviewed most of them. And, thankfully, this one passes muster with range of cohesive, agreeable, well-interpreted tracks that don't stand next to each other like sixth graders at a snowball dance. With tracks moving from punk and psychobilly to rock and traditional and revival country, this is one of the more versatile tributes. The rollicking and spirited "Kneeling Drunkard's Plea" by The Spookshow blissfully modernizes the Carter Family's ageless four-part harmony, and The Ghoul's "Cry, Cry, Cry" is a classic Austin-style singer/songwriter take. Great songs oft overlooked on Cash tributes are well-represented

here, including "One Piece at a Time," "Dark as a Dungeon," and "Wanted Man." I'm very pleased that The Bang Tale finally took seriously my open request to cover "Sunday Morning Coming Down"—and they did it well in an electrified-but-mellow '70s outlaw country style. Granted, there's always the chance that some of these bands suck outside of this comp, but as far as Cash tributes go, this is my second-favorite (number one is *Dressed in Black* on Dualtone), despite the variances in production values on some tracks. —Jessica T (Wolverine)

#### VIOLENT MINDS: 7"

Eight songs on a 45 with plenty of room to spare, okay? Hardcore songs that harken back to the day when people wrote stuff like this without feeling the need to splice in melodic instrumental breakdowns, grow their hair out like Farrah Fawcett, or croon emotively—in all seriousness—about their hands or dead trees. Know what I mean? Violent Minds just step in the room, assess the situation, and slay. Don't know how repetitive a full-length would be, but goddamn, I'd love to be a fly on the wall at one of their shows, if only to watch the blood and sweat arc through the air. —Keith Rosson (Deranged)

#### WABENO ROCK FARM:

##### *Dracula School of Paper*: CD

Let's pretend that, when you were growing up, you used to watch a Saturday morning cartoon about a blue

duck named Rosso. I think it was called "Wabeno Land." Anyway, Rosso was not particularly bright, but he had all sorts of crazy ideas. In one episode, he built a robot out of toilet paper and somehow that robot turned into a really successful stand-up comedian. After each adventure, though, Rosso ended up back in the same place: at work in the junkyard, quacking about everything he would do right tomorrow as he dug through the glove compartments of beat up old Buicks. If Rosso formed a band, it would sound like Wabeno Rock Farm. —MP Johnson (Self-released)

#### WASTED YOUTH:

##### *Wild and Wandering*: CD

Okay, see, when you're an old hardcore kid from L.A., there's only one Wasted Youth—the local one responsible for tunes like "Problem Child," "Teenage Nark," and "Uni High Beefrag." Though contemporaries, and who may have actually predated them by at least a few months, these Limey proto-goth post-punkers ain't them. Based solely on that criteria (look, I never said I was smart, okay? You want smarmy, pseudo-intellectual rock "journalism"? Go read fuckin' *Rolling Stone*) I've avoided even listening to anything by this band for twenty-nine years. So it pops up in the review piles, I figure what the hell, let's give it a go, and do so. Well, the me of twenty-nine years ago would've dismissed it outright as woefully boring. The brand-spankin' new, twenty-first millennium me, however, can appreciate it for what

it is: a nice bit of proto-goth post-punk. The tunes are dark around the edges and experimental in sound with enough bite to keep it from coming off as a huge pretentious wankfest. No, it ain't perfect, and the live tracks tacked on could've been easily shitcanned—no one but the most anal retentive fan missing 'em—but things are consistently interesting and occasionally a tune as snotty and subversive as "I Wish I Was a Girl" comes along and makes you say, "coooool." They may not be the true Wasted Youth, but they sure as hell ain't bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Cherry Red)

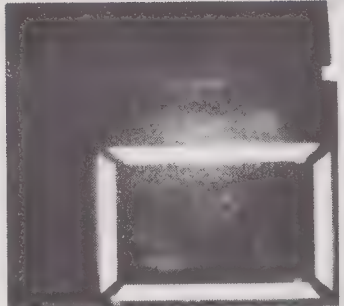
#### WATSON: *Chasing .500*: CD

The mark of ADD Records is now universally accepted as a sign that any piece of music is, at the bare minimum, a fuckton of awesome. And that's in metric! I'm unfamiliar with this band, but they remind me of Grabass Charlestons, only minus the grainy vocals. If this is their first release, then I expect nothing but great things. Bonus: Awesome art by Keith Rosson. —Bryan Static (ADD)

#### WE MARCH: *Creator/Destroyer*: CD

Epic doesn't have to mean shitty unicorns jumping over the Grand Canyon while dolphins suck them off, rainbows issuing from their blowholes. As any quick survey of chaos theory will supply, we know so little about fungus, foam, what compels people become parking police, and synapses that control addiction—the itty-bitty shit that should already be conquered

Manatease EP



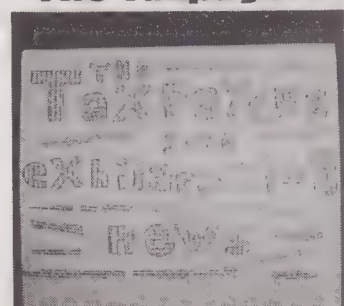
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but is fascinatingly complex. We March are broken egg yolks, diseases that shouldn't exist because the vaccine's already been made, ice the color and texture of asphalt taking up the side of winding country road, an ungrounded plug in a socket with unregulated current, pee mixing with blood and used oil with charred bits floating in it. Basically, you don't know what you're going to get, but the stage is set for someone to break a bone or hearts. Musically, this is in a Fleshies, This Moment In Black History, early Stooges, Chargers Street Gang sort of way. It's a dirty, seemingly unstructured chaos that, with repeat listens, is really a thousand dirty-fingernailed fists hammering ears at once, striking all that harder because you don't quite know what the fuck's coming next. Excellent. —Todd (Non-Prophet, no address, but when you Google the name, an ad for joining the Mormons comes up.)

#### WHITE BARONS / DEAD CITY ROCKERS: Split: 7"

The cover art on the White Barons side of this 7" is so goddamned stupid I honestly wanted to skip their song and write a piece of wild fiction for their half of the review. It appears they have an image, that of a snarling, large-breasted woman wielding two

broken bottles of Jack Daniels menacingly, that they want to foster. Based on the unimaginative, cheese dick cover illustration, I didn't want to like their song, "Logical Conclusion," but there is something undeniably catchy and over-the-top about it. I'm on the third listen and it has sunk its rawk-styled, New Bomb Turks hooks deeply into me. Damn it all to hell. The Dead City Rockers song, "I Wanna Be Poor," is a mid-tempo rocker (how fitting!) that is instantly forgettable. The singer sounds a lot like Joe Strummer and the music is staid and uninspired. Looks like the warning, "This shit will fuck you up!" on their side of the cover was completely unwarranted. —Josh Benke (Champagne & Cocaine)

#### WITCH: Paralyzed: CD

Second long-player from this doom metal trio from Vermont. Oh yeah, they have this drummer guy playing with them—J Mascis? Correct.—but that's not the reason you want this one. Super sludgy riffage, plodding rhythms, and creepy lyrics make this one a must have. "Psychotic Rock" is not only a warped tune on here, but a great way to think of Witch's style. Blast this one in your backyard late at night and then wander off into the woods. You'll scare the crap out of yourself for sure. —Sean Koeppenick (Tee Pee)

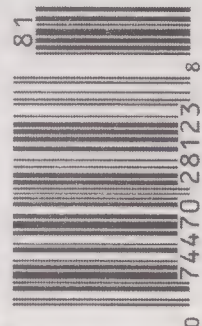
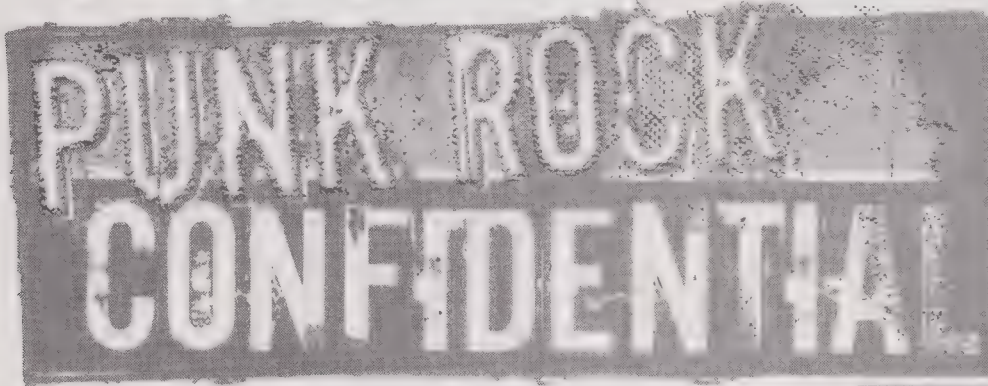
#### YOUNG OFFENDERS: Self-titled: 7"EP

There was a long stretch in the mid-to-late '80s and early '90s that—barring obvious exceptions—punk rock was in a dire stretch. This is conjecture: the Young Offenders are older dudes who had to live through that relative dry spell, so it makes sense that a new band goes to the achin' roots of punk, harvests them by the handfuls, and conditions them to something along the lines of home brewing. Yeah, there's Elvis Costello; yeah, there's Adverts; but there's also The Observers, The Marked Men, Giant Haystacks, and No Hope For The Kids. Here's a seemingly small—but ultimately important—distinction. All of those influences get processed—from being purified into thick malt to being poured and patiently fermented into individual bottles. It's the craft in which they're re-presented is what's so striking. Basic, age-old ingredients become new fuel in now-time. You don't have to know any of this process, really. Open the bottle, drink, enjoy. But if you can hear that care for detail, realizing all the crappy chaff they left out—as much as what they put in—the enjoyment to listening along to this 7" becomes much deeper. Hell yeah. —Todd (Parts Unknown)

Many more reviews can be found at: [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)



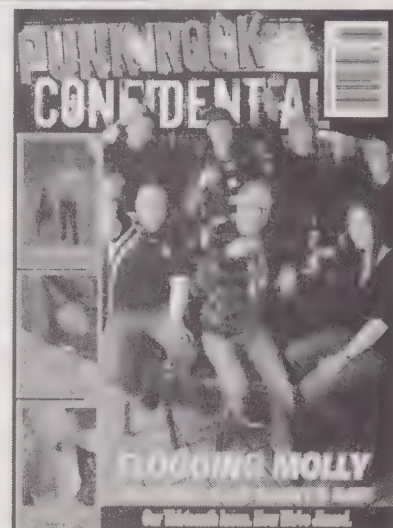
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"The contributors managed to make even bathroom blowjob stories boring. Thank you for not mentioning cocaine once, though."

—CT Terry

**AB #6**, \$2, 5 1/2" x 8", photocopied, 16 pgs.

If this zine were a person, I imagine it would be a confused, paranoid, older man with a huge beard. He'd ramble on and on in a hushed, scratchy voice about his distrust of researchers, the government, doctors, and even fellow mountain men. He would gesture wildly while talking about plans for solar cooking and buying land in depressed rural areas. Of course, his favorite topic is an endless list of herbal cures and random medical facts, although when asked for sources or to elaborate, he usually remained blank and moved on to the next topic. He seems to be quite obsessed with cancer, claiming that seemingly harmless products like sunscreen and French fries are probable causes for the disease. A mysterious black salve is mentioned a few times; apparently, there's some debate in certain communities regarding whether or not it can cure cancer. In summary, hanging out with this zine (your fearless reviewer even read the pages that were typed in 4 or 6 pt. font) was pretty goddamn tedious. —Lauren Trout (c/o Dwelling Portably, PO Box 190-ab, Philomath, OR 97370)

**BIG HANDS 5 1/2**, \$2 for zine / \$4 for zine & tape, 8 1/2" x 5 1/2", copied, 48 pgs. w / tape

So Aaron tries his hand, seriously, at rock journalism. This half issue (though at forty-eight pages and a cassette, readers are in no way getting ripped off) compromises his attempt at detailing the long and varied history of the band Chumbawamba, including the cultural, political, and economic climate of Great Britain at the time. The writing, per usual, is top notch, and Aaron, apart from his intro, does a terrific job of keeping himself out of the writing, something that may have been pretty hard to do considering the "perzine" nature of *Big Hands'* usual stomping ground. The first half makes up Aaron's treatise on the band, starting from their roots in the 1970s British peace-punk movement and

ending, suitably enough, with their short-lived commercial success and the activist/alternative community's subsequent backlash. The second half is made up of reprinted interviews with the band, graphics, and pamphlets they released. The tape features tons of their early 7" and cuts from various pre-*Tubthumper* LPs, making it nigh-impossible to write them off, even remotely, as a one-hit wonder. The love's apparent here and the guy's writing just keeps getting better. —Keith Rosson (Aaron, 1104 Imperial Rd., Cary, NC 27511)

**BIPEDAL, BY PEDAL!**, \$2, 4" x 5", copied, 39 pgs.

It is, as the subtitle states, a zine of experiences around and thoughts about the Critical Mass bicycle movement. I've always found Critical Mass to be interesting (although I've never participated), so this was informative and appealing to me. For those not in the know, "Critical Mass is a public event on the last Friday of every month... [S]elf-propelled commuters take to the streets in a group. Participants meet at a set location and time and travel as a group through city streets." There are a number of people's descriptions and experiences with Critical Mass, as well as some of the complaints and problems that the event has dealt with. If you're into CM or have an interest in it, this is definitely something worth checking out. —Kurt Morris (Microcosm Publishing, 222 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

**BITCH #39**, \$5.95, 8 1/2" x 11", glossy cover with printed pages, 96 pgs.

*Bitch* bills itself as a "feminist response to pop culture." I have a penis. Is it okay that I'm reviewing this? I guess I'll give it a shot. This is "The Wired Issue" of *Bitch*. There are pieces on female robots, blog bandits, the social politics of Second Life, and an interview with Ann Wilson from the band Heart. (Hell yes! I always loved "All I Wanna Do Is Make Love to You," and since it was risqué to my parents, I would

feel real awkward when it was on the radio and they were around.) There are also the normal columns and stuff on books and music, etc. I really loved the back page piece on the '70s drug-scare films. This was the first time I read *Bitch*, though, and I have to say I wasn't overly impressed with it—although the bit on feminist porn did cause me to go look for it on the net. I think a lot of my disinterest has to do with my penis. My sister, on the other hand, has a vagina and she loves *Bitch*. Go figure. —Kurt Morris (B-Word Worldwide, 4930 NE 29th Ave., Portland, OR 97211)

**CANDY OR MEDICINE #2**, \$1, 4" x 5 1/2", photocopied, 16 pgs.

A buck is a relative amount of money: a drop in the bucket if you're saving up to buy a car; a flood if you're looking for change under the couch to buy a pack of cigarettes. A financial consultant I am not; but I think that if you have a dollar to spare, it would be well spent on this zine. What else would you do with it? Buy a pack of bubblegum? Well, this zine holds equal value to a pack of bubblegum. It's twenty sticks of gum or fourteen adorable comics. Bubblegum is cheap enough to share with other people; *Candy or Medicine* has a cute snowman joke that I can't wait to show to the fifth graders I work with tomorrow. —Lauren Trout (www.candyormedicine.com)

**EXIT 63 #8**, \$?, 5" x 8", copied, ? pgs.

I've reviewed this zine in the past and it's still the same. It's a list of what the author did (usually between three and five items) each day. It can be summed up with the following: 1) Baseball, 2) Misses his girlfriend, Liz, who is in Africa, 3) Skateboarding, 4) Worked all day. There are a few other things, but unless you know the author, I don't see why this would interest you much. This zine would work better as a blog. —Kurt Morris (Matthew Bodette, 6466 VT Rt. 125, Vergennes, VT 05491)

**FAKE LIFE #4**, \$2 ppd., photocopied, 7" x 8 1/2", 38 pgs.

This is a phenomenal zine. Stories about a funeral, snitching, a couple band interviews, and an awesome story about how this guy lost his virginity—and that's just the first half. Then things get crazier. It's writing like this that makes me romanticize the South: very cool attitudes and ways of living are put forth on these pages. This one's been sitting on my stack for about six months, and I'm bummed it took me so long to find it. It also doubles as a flipbook. Great, great, great. —Will Kwiatkowski (Fake Life, PO Box 1174, Tallahassee, FL 32302)

**FAKE LIFE #6**, \$2 + shipping, contact for trades, free to prisoners, 1/2 letter, photocopied, 40 pgs.

This is the February issue of this zine, so it mostly revolves around relationships and love. Some of it seems to be fiction and some personal. It also has a few letters between a guy and his father who have a rather peculiar relationship. It's illustrated with a few comics, as well. It's got a lot of heartbreak and some bitterness. Not a bad read. —Craven Rock (CJ, PO Box 1174, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1174, www.pxsdistro.com, gomek@comcast.net)

**FISH WITH LEGS #11**, \$1 and stamps or \$2 ppd., 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 35 pgs.

I've been reading Eric's *FWL* for several years now and his zine is one of the best going. He's an amazing writer. He usually sticks to humorous prose because that's what he does best: gut-busting, laugh-out-loud, smart-ass commentary on life. This issue is the last of his "alphabet trilogy" where he writes about things as they come up alphabetically. There're quite a few subjects he's able to grace us with following that theme. It's a lengthy zine, covering squirrels breaking into his house, some of his "unpopular opinions," getting old, a car accident that he got into, and much, much more. My very favorite thing that he does, though, is his covering of events that he goes to. In this issue, he goes to a



comic convention and a pro wrestling match (both things he is a fan of). On these subjects, he truly shines as an amazing *zine* writer, as in any other medium would reign in his quirky and steadfastly individual style. The reason why these topics are the best for him is because he just wanders about noticing the ridiculous and absurd going on around him and making smart remarks about it; stuff any one of us would've looked right over for the bigger picture. Sometimes Eric comes off as a bit of an enigma: a smart and cultured guy

author signifies their particular pieces with their own handwritten titles. Both live in New Orleans and the vast majority of this goes from September 2005 through spring of 2007. The writing is excellent, poignant, and occasionally hard to bear because of the level of despair and frustration felt by the authors in the post-Katrina aftermath. This is further compounded by the rise in crime and the loss of their friend to random violence. Perhaps other zinesters have already written up their experiences of life in

activism can have on the personal life. A good, thoughtful merging of the personal and the political. Flip it over for some ho-hum fiction, complete with the beginning of a fantasy series. —CT Terry (Mishap, PO Box 5841, Eugene, OR 97405)

**NERVIO: THE CATS THAT ARE MY FRIENDS**, free, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 14 pgs. This *zine* is about the cats the author has known. Each page has a different cat, like, say, for instance, Poopers,

understanding the value of being in school, and making the best of that. *No Frets* would be better with a little less suburban guilt—you can't help where you're from, but you can change where you're going—but Mickey comes off as idealistic enough to soon understand that. This quote from the end of the *zine* sums it all up: "I really hope I can see those kids again someday. Maybe at a CrimethInc meeting or Plan-It-X Fest." —CT Terry (Mickey, PO Box 10563, Columbus, OH 43201)

**"If this *zine* were a person, I imagine it would be a confused, paranoid, older man with a huge beard."**

—Lauren Trout, *A*

living in a small Massachusetts town with probably a distinct lack of things to do and very few babes. But then I think, if I was as much amused by life as this guy, I guess I wouldn't care either. —Craven Rock (Eric Lyden, 224 Moraine St., Brockton, MA 02301-3664, ericfishwithlegs@aol.com)

**GRLOT #5**, Trade, 3 stamps or free to prisoners, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 94 pgs. Lose that beer you stole? Someone hating on your bike trip? Traveler girl split town with your CarHeart (Get it)? Consult B. Deller, patron saint of sneaking past college age in a college town, for the answers are in *Griot* 5! Things lag during the contributions, but this is a thick *zine*, so even after the slow, there's plenty of go. Held together with great copier art. Straight offa Indianola, drowning out the voices of the "O-H" shouters. —CT Terry (B. Deller, PO Box 10563, Columbus, OH 43201)

**HISTERIA**, \$2, 5" x 8", copied, 28 pgs. *Histeria* is billed as "a queer *zine*," but it's more like selected tales from the author's life with some queer-related material. The selected tales are, thankfully, interesting and worth your time. There are stories of school, work, moving, friends, and as mentioned previously, queer stories. Some of the queer writings are militant in tone and I can't say I necessarily agreed with what all was written, but I admired the passion and intelligence put into them. *Histeria* is by no means the best thing I've ever read, but it's far above average to most *zines*. —Kurt Morris (Justin Greanne, PO Box 365, Flagstaff, AZ 86002-0365)

**I HATE THIS PART OF TEXAS #7 / KEEP LOVING, KEEP FIGHTING #7**, \$?, 4" x 6", copied, 60 pgs. This is sort of a split *zine*, but not entirely. Each author writes pieces and they're interspersed throughout. Each

New Orleans after the levees broke, but I haven't read it. And in the back of my mind I had thought it would be cool to read what a zinester would say about that event. Hope and John have done a great job here. One big caveat (and frustration) to all this praise, however: the layout is fucked up and stuff repeats. I don't think I missed out on any stories but I really don't know. Hopefully it was just my copy. Even with that glaring problem, the writing here is still very special, insightful, and some of the best I've read in a long time. —Kurt Morris (Microcosm Publishing, 222 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

#### MANUAL DEXTERITY

Winter 2007, free, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 30 pgs. Music *zine* that has interviews with Mustard Plug, Look Mexico, and Maritime. It also has interviews with six more bands in that quick format where they ask them all the same six questions. The part that I liked was the interview with the old editor of *Anti-Matter* *zine*; it took me back a few years. I would guess that most of the people involved with *Manual Dexterity*, at some point in their lives, have given A New Found Glory, at least, a chance. Whatever that means to you... —Craven Rock (PO Box 1616, Monticello, MN 55362, subtitlespub@yahoo.com)

**MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #295**, \$4, 8 1/2" x 11", 200 pgs. Long-running newsprint *zine* *MRR* features columns, interviews, and reviews covering all niches of underground punk. It's almost as good as *Razorcake*. —CT Terry (Maximum RockNRoll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760)

**MISHAP #22 / 23**, \$3-4, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", 56 pgs. The final print issues of this Oregon *zine* before it goes the way of the dreaded blog. In #22, the editor writes about the impact that political

and descriptions of them, like how they meow or how they like being scratched behind the ears or how they are "the Jesus Christ of cats for (them)" or are so cute that he or she wants to smash their little faces in. So if this sounds interesting to you send a couple bucks to... ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME? WHAT IN THE HELL IS WRONG WITH THIS PERSON? Why would you subject someone to this? Who is it intended for? Why would anyone want to read some dingbat they don't know go on and on about cats they've never met? What service could this possibly be to anybody? I can't believe I read this whole thing just to give it a fair review. Like anybody's gonna give a fuck anywhere but, I don't know, maybe *Obsessive-Compulsive Spinster Quarterly* or some shit. Have you ever ridden the Greyhound next to someone who had so completely lost it that, after they got off, you felt completely disturbed and unsettled for the rest of the trip? That's how I felt after reading this. And why me? What did I do to deserve this? I fucking quit. Ya'll think I'm jokin'? —Craven Rock (Degrassi Digest, PO Box 56551, Portland, OR 97238, thezitreedy@gmail.com)

**NEW WAVE CUT AND PASTE, THE**, #5, \$?, 8 1/2" x 5", copied, 28 pgs. Cute little music-centric *zine* out of England, the visuals being composed entirely of clip art. Interviews with Chillerton, Colin from Defect Defect, Spiral Objective *zine* distro out of Melbourne, and a postal carrier. Plus some record and *zine* reviews. Quick read, pleasant enough. —Keith Rosson (Toby, Ground Floor 42, Buckingham Rd., Brighton, BN1 3RP, England)

**NO FRETS**, \$?, 4 1/4" x 3 1/2", 40 pgs. A feminist-anarchist takes an earnest look at life as an activist and a college student. Mickey writes very well about the conflict of not liking a lot of the community around your school, but

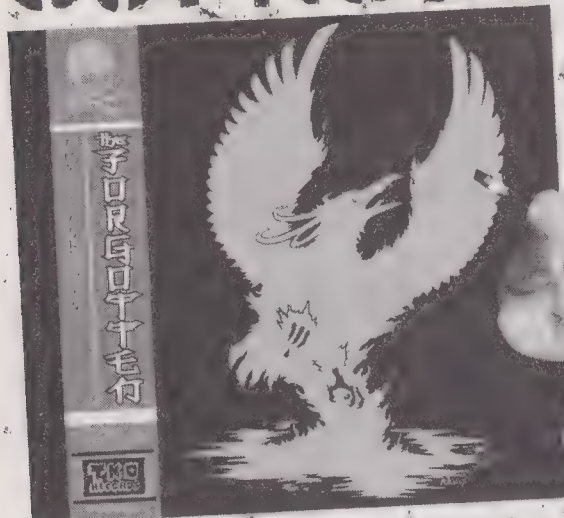
**NOSE KNOWS, THE** #41-45, #46-49, \$10 for 12 month subscription, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied, 20 pgs. Let me explain the way the project works to the best of my understanding: in exchange for sending the editor \$30, you will get a page of writings and drawings, which have been photocopied onto a colored piece of paper and folded into fourths, mailed to you weekly for a year. Or, for \$10 a year, four of the weekly papers will be folded up together and mailed to you every month. This is a very creative idea, but how I loathe the presentation. In issue #42 for example, there is a page and a half of recipes, a page with some thoughts about Phil Collins, and a page of chicken scratch handwriting about two subscribers who live next door to each other. Basically, a piece of paper divided into sections by different contributors, on topics that are totally unrelated. Even though about half of the content is interesting or funny, it's hard to get into this because it's all so random. The criticism I hear most often about my own writing is that I don't give enough background or context. I always thought, "Well, who cares? People don't need to know about who I am to appreciate my writing." Ah, but now I understand that I have been wrong. If you don't know whose life you're reading about, it's tough to come up with a reason for why you're reading it at all. I'd say this is worth spending \$10 for the monthly subscription if you a) know the people who write it, b) have a lonely mailbox, or c) are too attention-deficit to read normal-length *zines*. —Lauren Trout (Nose Knows, 2401 Burgundy #25, New Orleans, LA 70117)

**ORGA(NI)SM #3 / CALL AND RESPONSE #3**, \$4 ppd., 5 1/2" x 8", photocopied w/ color cover, 56 pgs. Seeing as how both of the *zines* that make up this split are about prison life and are edited by the same guy, it would make more sense to me if all this material was compiled in

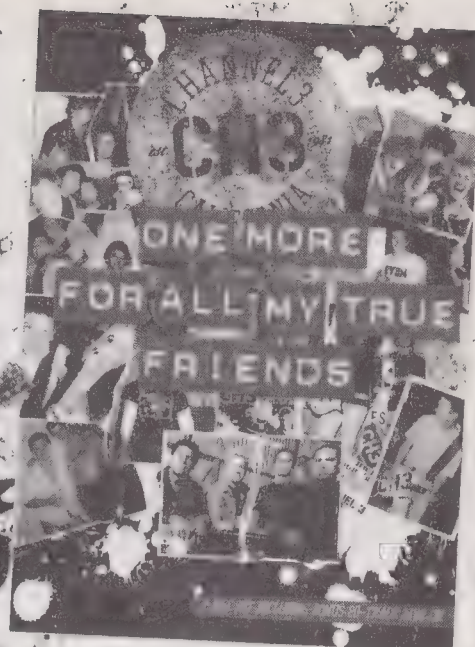


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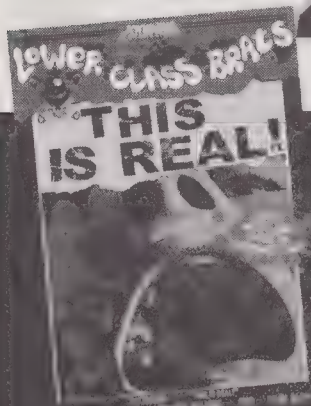
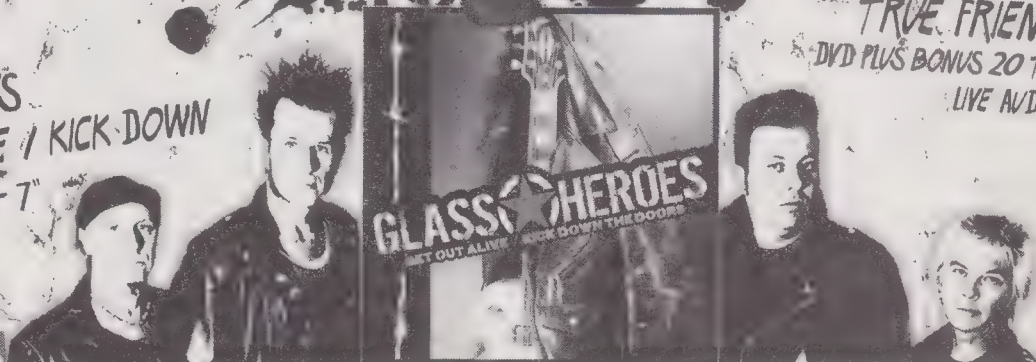


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just one of the zines. Despite the confusing format, this split is pretty rad. *Orga(ni)sm* features personal horror stories and straight facts dealing with the Japanese legal and prison systems, which take the cultural standards of conformity

rights-based organization called California Prison Focus. In it, they print news of human rights issues based around prisoners such as health care, prison labor (slavery), and censorship. It also prints creative writing by incarcerated folks. This should be read

of the zine world has lost nothing over time. It's still the same obsessed record collectors and pop-culture aficionados expounding on all the obscure records and artists. Stuff we have no hope of finding, yet since they are such great journalists, it just

their shirts putting them out and the readers read them with just as much passion. This was/is one of the better examples. Don't pass it up. —Craven Rock (Roctober, 1507 E. 53rd St., #617, Chicago, IL 60615, [www.rocktober.com](http://www.rocktober.com))

**"It's humorous, weird, and unique as fuck."** —Craven Rock

*Roctober #44*

and subordination to extremes. *Call and Response* publishes firsthand accounts of prison conditions and some broader information related to the problems that plague the prison system in America. This split is remarkable to me because it manages to avoid articles full of anti-prison rhetoric and news about the handful of American political prisoners who have received national attention—topics that have been covered to death in prison-themed literature. This is a great personal zine of well-written contributions from different people who happen to be incarcerated or are interested in sharing information about the prison system. —Lauren Trout ([jb64jp@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:jb64jp@yahoo.co.jp))

**PRISON FOCUS** #29, \$20 for four issues (\$5 for prisoners, free to California prisoners), free sample, 8 1/2" X 11", full size, newsprint  
This is the newsletter of the prisoners'

by everyone, and, if you have the money, subscribe and help this organization out. —Craven Rock (California Prison Focus, 1904 Franklin St., Suite 507, Oakland, CA, 94612)

**PUNK ROCK CONFIDENTIAL**, Winter 2007, \$3.95, 8" x 10 1/2", 88 pgs. A gossip rag about punk of the Warped Tour variety. It even has an ad for the pre-distressed Joe Strummer model Telecaster. I wish there was a vengeful Old Testament God who would come forth with forty days of rain to wipe this waste of glossy paper off the face of an otherwise peaceful earth. —CT Terry (Punk Rock Confidential, 236 West Portal Ave., Suite 134, San Francisco, CA 94127)

**ROCTOBER** #44, \$?, fullsize, newsprint, color cover, 134 pgs. This was definitely a pleasant surprise. I had no idea that this zine still existed. This wonderful sturgeon

makes it all the more compelling. It still has the usual, weird, and kind of ridiculous comics it's had for years. There are literally hundreds of reviews of swag in every sort of medium by enthusiast Waymon Tinsdale. There are Narduar interviews with Ice-T and Snoop Dog. There's a writer's attempt at an article on Lenny Bruce, one that seems to be just as much about his own disintegration that he experienced as a result of doing research on the comic. Tons of lists of albums we should own and musicians we should know about. Stuff on The Stooges, James Brown, Blue Cheer, *Destroying Angels* zine. I actually had to cheat on this one because I couldn't possibly finish it by the deadline. It's humorous, weird, and unique as fuck. Before zines were taken over by the "DIY scene" and were just DIY, there were lots of cool zines similar this one. They were basically just thick-ass magazines, except the editors lost

**XPLOITED ZINE** #2, 8 1/2" x 11", 50 pgs.

Can we please put a moratorium on zine intros that apologize for how long it took to put the zine out? You're not special. It's just as hard for everyone else. This is the public restrooms-themed issue of *Xploited*. The editor gathered and reprinted information about public bathrooms—especially ones in San Francisco—and the contributors managed to make even bathroom blowjob stories boring. Thank you for not mentioning cocaine once, though. —CT Terry ([www.exploitedproductions.com](http://www.exploitedproductions.com))

Hundreds more zine reviews can be found at [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org)



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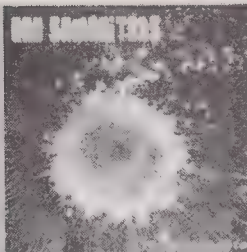
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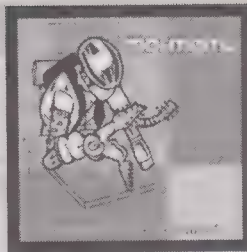
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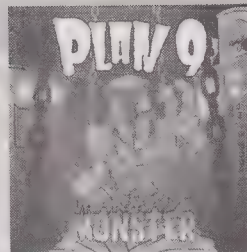




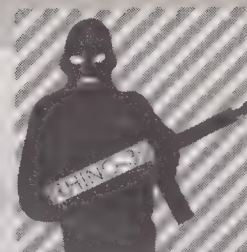
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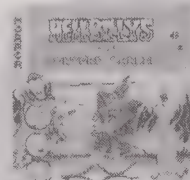
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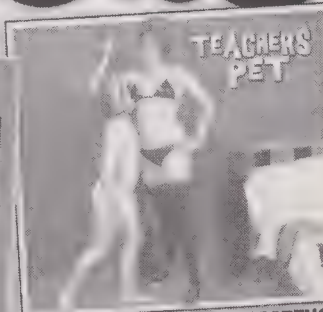
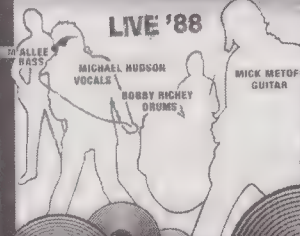
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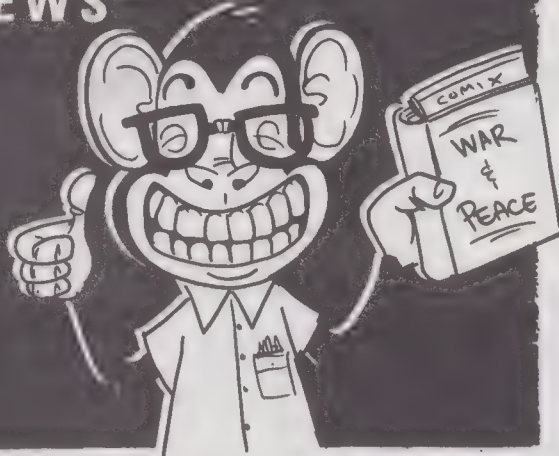
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# BOOK REVIEWS



## **Invincible Summer: An Anthology (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)**

By Nicole J. Georges, 192 pgs.

On the surface, this zine anthology is a huge collection of illustrated journal entries spanning six years of Nicole's life. She writes about her work, her lovers, places she's lived, funny things her friends have said, and her beloved dog, Beija. But there's something deeper here; there's a theme of almost childlike sincerity. The way she draws herself in a hat with bear ears and her friends surrounded by little hearts, the way she doesn't gloss over embarrassing or unflattering situations, and the fact that she expresses her feelings when she's going through rough times instead of pretending it's no big deal make this zine very down to earth and relatable. A new *Invincible Summer* anthology, picking up where this one left off, just came out in April 2008, and you can be sure that I'm going to track down a copy. —Lauren Trout (Microcosm, 222 S. Rogers St., Bloomington, IN 47404)

of coming directly into Mr. Turcotte's eye, though, because, at points—especially like with the shot of The Cramps' Lux Interior, or with Los Crudos playing live—it seems that the graphic designer couldn't help themselves by superimposing graphics into the middle of a great photo, robbing them of some impact. One more quick bitch: I don't think it'd be a bad idea to give a one to two word context to the people providing remembrances in the book. (Like what band they were in, if they were a superfan, roadie, or zinester to further indicate the wide swath of folks who've been suckered into this subculture.)

But, I'll leave you with this: anyone who's even remotely interested in punk, or even just a graphically interesting book, would love to have this in their bookshelf. It's pretty fucking incredible. It's a bit pricey, but the production level is super high and worth every penny. —Todd (Ginko Press, 5486 Paradise Dr., Suite J., Corte Madera, CA 94925)

## **Punk Pioneers: When Punk Was Fun**

By Jenny Lens, 211 pgs.

Jenny Lens was front and center in the Hollywood punk scene from its inception from around '76-'77 until the middle of 1980. It's undeniable that she not only caught the burgeoning and creative scene playing live—heavy on The Germs, The Screamers, The Bags, X, and the *Slash Magazine* crowd—but also in their day-to-day lives, providing many candid shots that couldn't have been taken in posed settings or snapped by an interloper. Jenny also caught the first wave of punk that washed through L.A.—from the Ramones' first tour visiting Rodney Bingenheimer, to Blondie, to Iggy Pop, to The Clash. Jenny's picture-taking was voracious, that's for sure, and the pure power of this book comes from these photos that tell stories of their own. The almost thirty years since these shots have been taken have been kind to these bands' memories while adding to their already considerable mystique and mythology. (Plus, I never knew that the Kamen Rider "statue" that Joey Ramone was standing next to, with his fist raised high, was a soda machine.)

The book's physicality is also impressive: the printing's vibrant (doing justice to the pictures), it's on heavy paper, and it looks great.

I'm a big reader. The narrative of the book is a simple arc: the photos are chronological. And I'll be the first to admit that I don't own many photo books, so this may be out of place, or if it's proper to comment on the words in a photo book. Even with a lot of focus and keeping my finger in the page to refer back to it, I would often be confused to what Jenny was talking about. The word-narrative skips around. It took me a bit to figure out, but

## Isn't this what punk is all about? Showing something primitive and ugly and showing it off in all its hideous glory?

## **Punk Is Dead, Punk Is Everything: Raw Material from the Martyred Music Movement**

By Bryan Ray Turcotte, 289 pgs.

*Fucked Up and Photocopied* is one of my favorite books on punk rock. At its core, it's a collection of flyers. But its secret weapon—which was refreshing—was letting the artwork tell its own stories instead of a lot of blowhards yelling at today's punks for being dickweeds. Bryan Ray Turcotte's second offering is just as good. The focus branches out from solely flyers, to posters, pins, photos, zine covers, and artwork. The premise is simple: contact influential punks and longtimers, scan in their "punk provenance," and, often, have them tell a little story for some context. The breadth and width is also refreshing. The pioneers are given due reverence, but the lesser-historied peace punk, no-coast bands, death rock, skate punk, thrash, and current-day hardcore bands are given some pages, too. Sure, there are bands and zines I wish were in this collection—ones that I see as obvious overlooks—but I also cherish the treat of seeing covers of *Sniffing Glue* and *Suburban Voice* and reading Biscuit from the Big Boys remembrance of when punk hit Austin. I'm also intimate with the schwanled clusterfuck of getting more than five punks to do what they've agreed to on any given day so they can come over and complain. So, hats off, Mr. Turcotte for wrangling together a second kickass book.

Quite possibly the most striking aspect of both of these books—beyond the source material—is the graphic design. It's bold, inventive, and while relying on the established punk aesthetic, cranks it up really fucking high. Both books push the aesthetic it new and exciting directions, conveying a graphic message that the book embodies: this music wasn't just great in the past; it's great now and it's constantly morphing. I'll stop a hair short

it's almost like a tape recorder was put in front of Jenny, she flipped through the book's galley, talked about the photos, roughly in order, and the words in the book are a direct transcription of her talking.

Sometimes, the word-narrative is photo-to-photo where the only break from one photo to the next is normal a paragraph indent, which can be jarring. Sometimes, she'd tell a story that the photo spurred for several paragraphs before commenting on the next photo, so it was hard to get a pattern down. There were often times I was confused because there are no formalized breaks, no little icons that referred to a specific photo, no slight change in font to indicate a memory or a direct picture reference, no systematic differentiation, and the narrative was hard to decipher. I'm still not sure on the "hows" or "whys" Farrah Fawcett Majors taunted Jenny (but she did give her the nickname of Jenny Lens), Jenny's pregnancy, or why Jenny chose to shoot heroin instead of going to see X. These seem like interesting stories, but they come across a little jumbled and unresolved.

What isn't jumbled, though, is as a picture book; *Punk Pioneers* is fantastic. It's like the best possible West L.A. first wave punk scrapbook you're bound to come across; Jenny has a ton of compassion and respect for whom she shot, and in this day and age of limited access and many bands "protecting their image," it's a refreshing look at an era that looks like it was a hell of a lot of fun. —Todd (Universe, 300 Park Ave. South, NY, NY 10010)

## **Rock & Roll Heart**

By Chris Walter, 245 pgs.

Everything about this book tells me I should hate it. A majority of the characters can all be lumped under the category of "asshole," typos are everywhere, and the moral of the story seems to be "stab your friends in the



# MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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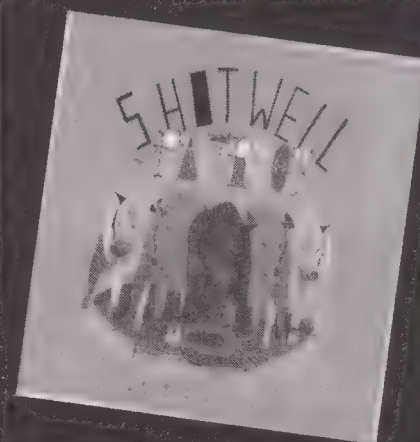
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## I'm still not sure why Jenny chose to shoot heroin instead of going to see X.

back to get what you want." Yet, I found this book to be an enjoyable read.

The novel follows the adventures of the brand new Canadian punk rock sensation Drug Of Choice as they rise and fall on a rollercoaster of emotions and drama. Drug Of Choice is made up of the Johnny Ramone-esque Danny, his girlfriend Donna, Danny's asshole brother Angel, a seemingly white collar pot dealer named Lucky and Tish, who loves Motörhead. Chris Walter knows what he's doing with plot, all the events seemed to flow smoothly, and, at several points, I actually thought the words "what's going to happen next?" However, where he excels in storytelling, he lacks in keeping his thoughts straight.

You see, the novel is told in a rotating first-person narrative. Every chapter, the narrator changes, mostly staying within the members of Drug Of Choice. During several times in the book, characters will talk about themselves in third person about the actions they are doing at that time. The strangest part was when Tish, who we are told several times is anti-drinking, takes a casual chug of her beer.

The main characters themselves are all a bunch of jerks. Danny is a control freak, Donna is full of lust for Angel, and Angel is an addict who pisses on the audience (literally). Tish and Lucky only seem to be assholes to each other in their weird, broken two-sided love triangle.

Thinking about it, isn't this what punk is all about? Showing something primitive and ugly and showing it off in all its hideous glory? If that is what he's aiming for, he did a great job. Though the book has its flaws, a good story is a good story. I give this book the Bryan Static Seal of Approval. —Bryan Static (GFY Press, #34-2320 Woodland Dr., Vancouver, BC V5N 3P2, [www.punkbooks.com](http://www.punkbooks.com))

### Snitches Get Stitches

By Charly "The City Mouse" Fasano, illustrated by Vincent Fasano

There's this punk girl who I know. She's okay, I guess. But she annoys the piss out of me. She's one of those *baaad* girls. Always acting, well, *baaad* all the time. For instance, I ran into her recently, in a different city than the one where I met her. I said hi and she recognized, but couldn't place me. Which is fine, I don't know her all that well, but when she put it together,

the first thing she does is start telling me about how the night before she got drunk, passed out in the street, almost got arrested for telling the cops to fuck off, and then she beat some guy up, puked, and, I don't know, took it in the ass or something. From the simple fact that she didn't really even know who I was a few minutes before she brags to me about her ribaldry, it's obvious that it wasn't because she thought I, specifically, would appreciate it, but that it's the first thing out of her mouth to anyone who'll listen. I don't doubt that's who she really is, this *baaad* girl who does crazy stuff. But it's such a boring, cultivated, self-fulfilling personality. She has this idea of who she is and has to constantly be aware of herself to keep it up.

That's the way I feel about Charly "The City Mouse" Fasano; he's this punk poet, who finds that most poetry is "impossible to relate to" for folks today; he wants to write poetry "where people aren't intimidated by wording or rhythm of it." While he's able to transcend this cliché, he falls into the other one, the cheap room-living, alcoholic, loser-chic poet. He might be writing poetry that is more accessible and relevant to people today, but he's not interesting enough for those same people to change their non-verse reading habits—regardless of how many punk plugs he throws in there. I have no doubt that "City Mouse" is anything but the alcoholic, tortured poet that hooks up with *baaad* girls like the one I described above. But at some point, it seems that he decided that that was what he would need to do to be a poet and lived that lifestyle until it was truly him.

And after a while, it gets pretty boring. I mean, it might have been absolutely necessary for Doestoyevsky to be an epileptic for him to write such frenzied, compulsive stuff, but did he have to make references to it all the time? It might have been completely necessary for Bukowski to be an alcoholic loser to write such gritty and tortured shit, but unlike "City Mouse," he didn't have the blueprint to cultivate such a personality. Too bad Bukowski unintentionally wrote one for every poet that came after him.

—Craven Rock (Fast Geek Press)



## DVD REVIEWS



### Little Runaway #2: DVD

Over the years, as a hack reviewer for *Razorcake*, I've had Todd throw a lot at me. Oftentimes it's been wobbly balloons filled with hot diarrhea, other times it's been glowing orbs of punk rock ambrosia. Either way, I've always tried to be a decent bottom-of-the-order hitter and put the bat on the ball, as they say in baseball, to see what I could muster. Every once in a while I've even risked cerebral damage and taken a ball to the bean, just for the sake of the team. If *Razorcake* had the equivalent of baseball cards, I'd be one of those odd looking guys with an ill-fitting uniform who no one remembers, but who somehow managed to shamble about in the big leagues

for a surprising number of years, despite momentous mediocrity. But the important part is: I've pretty much seen and heard it all. Or so I thought.

Staying with the already thin baseball analogy, I'd have to say that *Little Runaway 2* is something between a knuckleball and a spitball, as pitches go. Maybe even with a little emery board doctoring thrown in for good measure. This one has me standing and looking—like a hapless Brewer at home plate. Now, I've seen and heard plenty of things that many folks would consider "pornographic" in my day. For example: I've seen most of the DVDs of GG Allin doing his naked, shit-smeared version of *Sweating to the Oldies* and I've listened to things like records of the Nobodys' joyfully juvenile smut punk. But this is the first time something has come my way review-wise that is "porno" in the big, consensus-reality sense of the word. In other words, it's not so much one of those "I-can't-tell-you-exactly-what-pornography-is, but-I-know-it-when-I-see-it" sort of things; this DVD is a known commodity—produced, labeled and sold worldwide as "pornography." Or more cheerfully known as "adult entertainment." What that means, pig simple, is that this is a collection of moving pictures of engorged domesticated primate males copulating in various rugged ways with receptive domesticated primate females. It's the very thing that made Andrea Dworkin a blustery and outspoken androphobe and it's the sort of stuff that has inspired, in my own hometown, at least one radical feminist to immolate herself in protest in the "adults only" section of a certain big-time magazine store. Have I made myself clear?

The reason I'm beating this to death is because I didn't think *Razorcake* usually reviewed this sort of thing. This isn't something smutty, this is flat-out *smut*. Whether it's considered offensive or not is one thing, but this is the stuff that everyone, *everyone* without exception—from *Family Circus* creator Bill Keane to John "The Wadd" Holmes—would immediately classify as "porn." But unlike the porn that your parents enjoy, the people engaged in the fucking and sucking in *Little Runaway 2* are dolled up in full punk rock regalia, complete with brightly colored mohawks, red skinhead suspenders, and tattooed schlongs. And as a sort of "garnish" to the visual



feast of flesh, there are plenty of punk bands playing along to the slurping and groaning and there's even a few Neanderthal-style fist fights thrown in for good measure.

So here I am, standing at bat, as it were, and wondering if I really can make something of this chin music that Todd has thrown my way. I mean, it's been a coon's age since I've even seen a *Hustler*, such is my life as a hermit, that I can barely remember all the cute porn industry colloquialisms for cum and beavers. In fact, I'm not even sure anymore that they still spell it c-u-m. However you prefer to spell it though, there's plenty of it in *Little Runaway 2*; one particularly goopy scene takes place aboard a bus heading to something called "Punk Fest 2007." One rather fetching young lass finds herself naked amid the busload of grinning goons—who, incidentally, look more like frat boys than punks—and is soon hopelessly entangled in a jungle gym of boners, which ultimately results in her head and upper torso being spackled in gallons of ape paste.

And then it's a disjointed hop off to yet another fuck fest somewhere else, set to an ever present barrage of ornery, pounding street punk. Though it's subtitled "a punk rock love story" *LR2* has less of a discernable story line than *Waiting for Godot*. Best I can tell, there's some sort of on-going grudge match taking pace between the skinheads and a group of clowns dressed up like the gang of ultraviolence droogs from *A Clockwork Orange*. Beyond that, I can't make out much of a story. But this is Porno Land, where story lines are about as common as introspective Republicans. And it's widely accepted as axiomatic that, along with condoms, nothing throws a wet blanket on testosterone-driven barnyard-like fucking more than a stupid story line. So I can hardly fault them for that.

Where I do have a slight problem with *Little Runaway 2* is in the brain-frozen, Og the Caveman, pull-the-woman-by-her-hair-back-to-your-cave style with which the gents in the film choose to funnel their sexual energies. Though I am fairly tired of certain punk rock factions chronically presenting themselves as cartoony cavemen covered with the wildly popular 21<sup>st</sup> century advertising known as "tattoos," I find myself reaching the state of Absolute Disinterest when that cartooniness takes the form of full-blown, barbaric ego gratification. *LR2* is crawling with pushy animalistic jerks who demonstrate their street punk machismo by choking the very woman who is kind enough to service them sexually and in one *A Clockwork Orange* "milk bar" inspired scene, a misguided Alex Wannabe slaps a sort of jiu-jitsu hold

on the attractive girl fellating him and keeps her gagging and impaled on his rigid dong until she regurgitates moloko.

I used to wonder who would ever watch more than one Max Hardcore film and now I think I know. This is ol' Max all over again except now he's wearing tattoos and a Skrewdriver shirt instead of a dorky cowboy hat. Fortunately though, as pornos go, it's not all lost to the snarling erect ape pack and their sexual thuggery, because the women on the DVD are, for the most part, hot exhibitionistic punk girls.

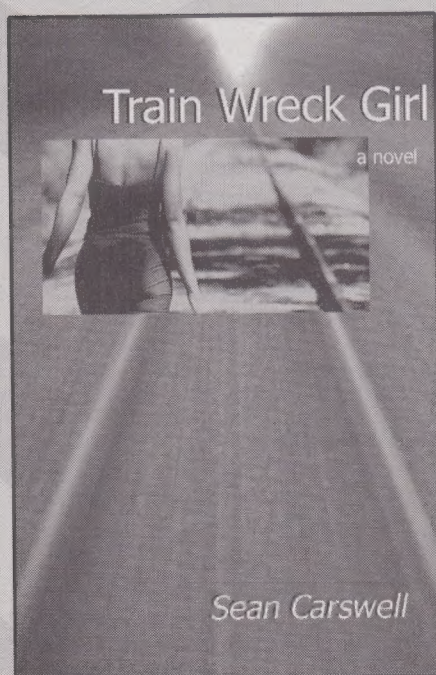
And the soundtrack—as well as the accompanying CD—features plenty of fast, in-your-face working class punk from bands like Bad Samaritans, Killroy, Circle One, Virus Nine, and Politikal Dekline. But at the end of it all, when the mohawks go down and all the spudge is mopped up and everyone puts their punk outfits back on, I'm still left with the somewhat hollow feeling of having just had a window seat looking into the slithering reptilian sex fantasy backwaters of Wattie "Exploited" Buchan's brain. I know I'm coming harrowingly close to sounding like a prude here, but the simple fact is I like porno as much as the next guy; but for some reason, erect bullies bore me. I know that plenty of "perfectly well adjusted people" out there get their kicks by being on either the doling out or receiving side of rough sex, but as a voyeur, I'm just not all that interested in sex that could be mistaken for a WWE match.

And this has nothing to do with morals or ethics and any of that hooley, because I'm assuming here that all the naked people tangled up together in *Little Runaway 2* are consenting adults. So it's really just a style thing for me. But I should probably shut up before I sound even more like a frigid little old church lady. Look, if you like your pornos Wattie-style, with plenty of "sex and violence"—accompanied by some pretty good thumping punk music—then this might just be the DVD for you. Best I can figure, the key to getting your rocks off on a film like this lies more in having some kind of a sexual-violence fetish than in being into punk rock. A little closet misogyny might help too. In fact, it occurs to me that if O.J. "The Juice" Simpson were reviewing this DVD for *Hustler*, he'd probably end up giving it a rating of "Fully Erect." —Aphid Peewit (JM Productions, [www.mrfilth.com](http://www.mrfilth.com))

To read more DVD reviews,  
turn the dial to [www.razorcake.org](http://www.razorcake.org).



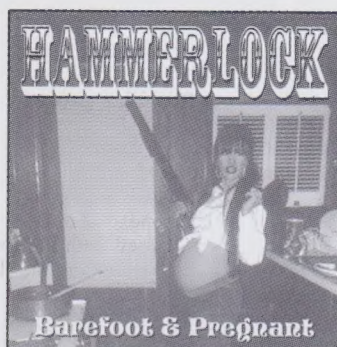
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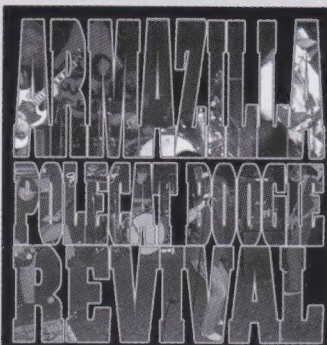
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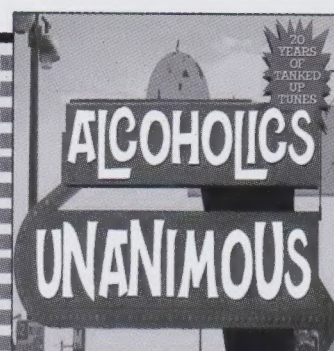




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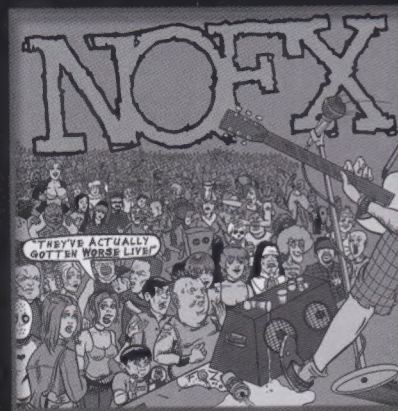
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